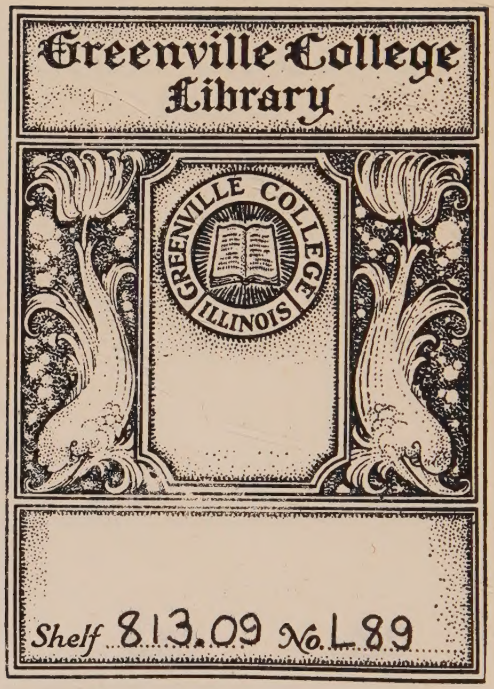
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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY STUDIES IN ENGLISH
AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

THE EARLY AMERICAN NOVEL

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BY

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PREFACE

To present a fairly comprehensive account of the earliest attempts at novel writing in America has been the aim of this study. The period covered—that from 1789 to 1830—opens with the publication of the first tentative and amateurish American novels and at its close leaves the novel an established form in American literature.

In dealing with these early tales much space has been given to description of the stories themselves. This method of treatment seemed to be necessary for two reasons—because these tales are little known, indeed, with a few exceptions, they are generally unknown, and because most of them are rare, and some of them almost inaccessible.

The early American drama has, of course, received much attention and investigation, but the corresponding period in the history of fiction has been neglected. Yet the first forty years of American fiction produced two novelists of real importance, Charles Brocken Brown and James Fenimore Cooper, while the drama produced no playwright of lasting interest or influence. The history of novel writing in this period seems, therefore, to have some claim to attention from the point of view of literary history as well as from that of social interest.

The difficulty of gathering material so generally unsought by either students or collectors has been considerable. So many books have been discovered by chance that I am conscious that there must be many others to which no chance has led me. It seems probable, however, that any further discoveries will fall into some one of the classes of fiction here discussed, and will thus be chiefly of bibliographical importance.

My indebtedness to Mr. Oscar Wegelin's bibliography of early American fiction is obvious and great. I wish, also, to express my thanks to Mr. Wegelin for aid in obtaining books and for several additional titles. I am indebted to Mr.

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Edward B. Reed of Yale University for information in regard to *Alonzo and Melissa;* to the officers of the New York Society Library for many courtesies and for the use of their excellent collection of early fiction, both English and American, and to the officers of the Library of Columbia University for assistance in obtaining books.

The original inspiration and the subsequent patient guidance of this study constitute only a small part of my debt of gratitude to Professor W. P. Trent of Columbia University. I take this opportunity to express my grateful thanks for many years of personal kindness and scholarly inspiration.

CHAPTER I

The Didactic and the Sentimental

When the Revolution made a conscious separation between American and English literature, America had already developed a considerable literary activity. Among the fruits of this incipient literary culture were a mass of religious writing, much verse, some history, a few attempts at drama, and a large amount of political and controversial writing. The *genre* most noticeably absent from this list is the novel. Colonial America had produced no novelist, although in England the great novels of the century had long been written. In view of the active interest shown in poetry and the drama, such apparent neglect of a prevailing literary fashion cannot be attributed to lack of literary ambition and effort. Its causes are rather to be sought in two important aspects of early American culture,—the surviving Puritan spirit, and the colonial spirit.

The Puritan attitude toward the lighter forms of literature is too well known to need discussion here. Its survival is evident in the words of Timothy Dwight, whose taste for poetry, and music, and other unpuritanical joys could not reconcile him to the sudden development of fiction which took place in his day. "Between the Bible and novels there is a gulf fixed," he says,[1] "which few novel readers are willing to pass. The consciousness of virtue, the dignified pleasure of having performed one's duty, the serene remembrance of a useful life, the hope of an interest in the Redeemer, and the promise of a glorious inheritance in the favor of God are never found in novels."

The novelists of the earlier period in America show, in their prefaces, a nervous consciousness of the possibility of such censure, and endeavor to forestall it by showing that they are

[1] *Travels in New England and New York.* London, 1823, Vol. I, p. 477.

not as other novelists—that their works are calculated, not to mislead, but to direct, the young mind. The Reverend Enos Hitchcock, one of our earliest writers of fiction, and, like Timothy Dwight, a Revolutionary chaplain, makes his heroine utter the warning[1]—"Nothing can have a worse effect on the mind of our sex than the free use of those writings which are the offspring of modern novelists." The same dread of the pernicious effects of novel reading appears in Mrs. Foster, Mrs. Rowson, and the other literary ladies who were our first novelists.

Puritanism, of course, did not control the opinions of the whole country. More general was the colonial spirit, under whose influence Americans looked to England as their mother country, gave their sons an English education, whenever possible, and sought in English manners a model for their own. Readers filled with such a spirit naturally satisfied their taste for fiction with the stories of English life which constant traffic and intercourse made accessible.

This spirit of filial acceptance could not survive the Revolution. When the confusion of war had had time to subside, thoughtful people, gazing with a pardonable complacency on what they had already accomplished, decided that thereafter manners and letters, as well as laws, should be home-made. "We have already," said the Reverend Enos Hitchcock, "suffered by too great an avidity for British customs and manners, it is now time to become independent in our maxims, principles of education, dress, and manners, as we are in our laws and government."[2] Ardent patriots at once applied themselves to the task of supplying a literature which should reflect American manners. Thus the new spirit of national self-consciousness united with the unbending of the Puritan spirit to make the last decade of the eighteenth century one of novel writing, as well as of novel reading.

Royall Tyler, in the preface to his *Algerine Captive*,[3] pub-

[1] *Memoirs of the Bloomsgrove Family.* Boston, 1790, Vol. II, p. 82.
[2] *Memoirs of the Bloomsgrove Family.* Vol. I, p. 16.
[3] *The Algerine Captive, or the Life and Adventures of Dr. Updike Underhill, a Prisoner among the Algerines.* Walpole, Vt., 1797.

lished in 1797, illustrates both the changed attitude toward the reading of fiction and the demand for a novel of native manners. "One of the first observations the author of the following sheets made upon his return to his native country, after an absence of seven years, was the extreme avidity with which books of mere amusement were purchased and perused by his countrymen. When he left New England, books of biography, travels, and modern romances were confined to our seaports; or if known in the country were read only in the families of clergymen, physicians, and lawyers; while certain funeral discourses, the last words and dying speeches of Bryan Shaheen and Levi Ames, and some dreary somebody's day of Doom, formed the most diverting parts of the farmer's library." When he returned, however, he found that libraries and booksellers had filled the land with "modern travels and novels almost as incredible. . . . No sooner was a taste for amusing literature diffused, than all orders of country life with one accord forsook the sober sermons and practical pieties of their fathers for the gay stories and splendid impieties of the traveller and the novelist. The worthy farmer no longer fatigued himself with Bunyan's Pilgrims up the hill of difficulty . . . but quaffed wine with Brydone in the hermitage of Vesuvius, or sported with Bruce in the fairy land of Abyssinia." The dairymaid and the hired man, he says, no longer wept over the ballad of the cruel step-mother, but amused themselves into an agreeable terror with the haunted houses and hobgoblins of Mrs. Radcliffe.

Two things, however, the author finds to be deplored. "The first is that while so many books are vended they are not of our own manufacture.[1] . . . The second misfortune is that, novels being the picture of the time, the New England reader is insensibly taught to admire the levity, and often the vices, of the mother country. . . . If the English novel does not inculcate vice, it at least impresses on the young mind an erroneous idea of the world in which she is to live. It paints the manners, customs, and habits of a strange country; excites

[1] See also the *Massachusetts Magazine*, 1791, Vol. III, p. 662. "On modern novels and their effects."

a fondness for false splendors; and renders the habits of her own country disgusting. 'There are two things wanted,' said a friend to the author, 'that we write our own books of amusement and that they exhibit our own manners.'" Tyler's own tale was to "display a portrait of New England manners hitherto unattempted."

To English novelists, however, the aspiring authors looked for models. *Humphrey Clinker,* the last book of any of the great novelists of the century, had been published in 1771. Between its publication and that of the first American novel in 1789 only one novel of real merit had appeared—Fanny Burney's *Evelina* in 1781. The production of novels in this period, however, had been astonishing in quantity. The hopelessness of any attempt to characterize this mass of fiction, or to classify it according to influences, is pleasantly illustrated by the fact that Mr. Raleigh[1] describes Robert Bage as coming nearest of all imitators to Richardson, while Mr. Saintsbury[2] finds in him an imitator of Fielding and Smollett with the addition of a deliberately immoral purpose, and Mr. Cross[3] says that Bage had "posed in literature as a second Sterne." Certain types and characteristic themes can, nevertheless, be distinguished among the countless "memoirs," "histories," "adventures," "domestic stories," "sacred novels," and "tales of real life," written by "ladies of quality," "ladies of distinction," "sons of Neptune," and assumers of other elegant aliases.

The various adventures are usually strings of incidents, so far beyond the scope of one man's possible experience that they are assigned to some object easily capable of passing from one hand to another, such as a guinea, a shilling, a gold headed cane, or a lap-dog. The purpose of these is satirical, and this intention is shared by the various Quixotes, the female Quixote,

[1] Walter Raleigh, *The English Novel,* New York, 1906, p. 211.

[2] "An imitator of Fielding and Smollett in general plan, of the latter especially in the dangerous scheme of narrative by letter,—Bage added to their methods the purpose of advocating a looser scheme of morals and a more anarchical system of government." *A History of Nineteenth Century Literature.* London and New York, 1899, p. 42.

[3] W. L. Cross, *The Development of the English Novel,* New York and London, 1904, p. 88.

the spiritual Quixote, the benevolent Quixote, the infernal Quixote, and the like.

The various histories, domestic stories, and tales of real life, of every degree of romance and realism, of every condition of life from the cottage to the castle, have elements inherited from their great predecessors. The influence of Richardson persists rather in subject than in manner. He has contributed the fascination exerted by tales of seduction, as Fielding has given the nobly devoted wife, who becomes one of the stock figures of the domestic tale. But, while Fielding merely left the character of his Booth somewhat colorless in order that the virtues of his Amelia might shine more brightly, later writers, craving more vivid contrasts, painted the unfortunate marital background a sooty black. The influence of Sterne, which seems generally to be filtered through Mackenzie, is present in forms varying from a melting sensibility, "a dropping of warm tears," if one may borrow that phrase, to a scarcely perceptible humidity of atmosphere. Of these three influences that of Fielding is the least felt, in part, perhaps, because it is the least easy to detect, but more decidedly because the first requisite for a novelist at this time seems to have been the entire absence of any sense of humor.

The favorite ingredients of these tales are a lovely and gifted heroine, a devoted wife and mother with a brutal and vicious husband, or a vain and negligent mother, whose kind and pious spouse expires early in the first volume leaving his daughter without a protector, a heartless relative or guardian, preferably an aunt, a confidante who is usually, as one of them describes herself, "a sprightly toad," a virtuous hero, a designing villain, and one or two faithful retainers. Many of these tales can be reduced to the trials of a helpless maiden, consequent upon ill-treatment by an unfeeling relative. The alluring simplicity of this formula, and its infinite possibilities of variation, commended it to the many aspiring novelists of the day. It supplied, in particular, a theme to the women novelists whose band had grown in numbers and prosperity[1]

[1] The first edition of *Vancenza, or the Dangers of Credulity,* by Mrs. M. Robinson, is said to have been "Sold off in London before 12 o'clock of the day on which it first issued from the press." *New York Magazine,* Vol. I, p. 303.

since Smollett had said of novel-writing: " That branch of business is now engrossed by female authors who publish merely for the propagation of virtue, with so much ease, and spirit, and delicacy, and knowledge of the human heart, and all in the serene tranquillity of high life, that the reader is not only enchanted by their genius but reformed by their morality."[1]

Although these conventional themes and personages were most abundant in the novels of the century's last three decades, other elements were then entering fiction. The growing spirit of romanticism is seen not only in the more romantic situations of these tales, exemplified in Mrs. Bennett's melodrama *De Valcourt,* but in the popularity of other forms, the oriental tale and apologue, the educational romance inspired by Rousseau, and the educational tales for the edification of the young, influenced by Madame de Genlis, of which the classic example is *Sandford and Merton.* Toward the end of the period the pseudo-historical novel and the tale of terror flourished side by side. French and German fiction, in part through Holcroft's translations, reached English readers, and the " heroine in the Kotzebue taste," so displeasing to Miss Edgeworth, was introduced to the Ellens, Emmelines, and Elizas of the " female novelists."

It is to these female novelists, rather than to the great writers who preceded them or to the more dignified schools of Gothic, historical, and revolutionary fiction which filled the last decade of the century, that we owe our first novelists. The women who wrote fiction in England had, for the most part, little power of construction and less of character-drawing; their stories were encumbered by " episodes " without organic relation to the plot; and their style was often both essentially weak and disfigured by Della Cruscan ornamentation. Their experience of life was apparently small, their invention limited to new combinations of well-worn situations and personages. It was scarcely to be expected that their sisters and heirs, the first American novelists, should produce works of enduring literary merit.

Didacticism and sentimentality were the chief characteristics of the British novel in the period immediately preceding the

[1] Smollett, *Miscellaneous Works,* Vol. VI. (*Humphrey Clinker*), p. 136.

vogue of the Gothic. Naturally the same moods and purposes appear in the first American novels,[1] most of which, like their British models, were the work of women. The writings of these women fall into two groups: the first of which includes the more directly didactic tales, whose authors proclaim their moral purpose, while the second consists of stories more romantic in spirit, describing sentimental vicissitudes for their own sake, rather than for the moral lessons they suggest. Slightly different influences appear in the few men who wrote novels before Charles Brockden Brown. But their work is so usually didactic in purpose, and so frequently sentimental in tone, that it may conveniently be considered in connection with that of the more numerous women novelists who represent sentimental didacticism in its most typical form.

The first to attempt the moral regeneration of the youth of America, through the persuasive art of fiction, was the New England poetess, Mrs. Sarah Wentworth Morton.[2] She had observed that "didactic essays are not always capable of engaging the attention of young ladies. We fly from the laboured precepts of the essayist to the sprightly narrative of the novelist." Mrs. Morton was doubtless supported in the undertaking by the consciousness of an established literary reputation.[3] Her poems earned for her the title of "the American Sappho." To her novel, *The Power of Sympathy,* she prefixed a solemn dedication to the young ladies of Columbia, which the printer, perceiving the greatness of the occasion, adorned

[1] A few novels of these earliest years of American fiction belong to new and different types and will be discussed in Chapter III.

[2] A woman of American birth, Mrs. Charlotte Lennox, had been a popular novelist in England nearly forty years before the publication of *The Power of Sympathy.* But she left America while still a child and can hardly be claimed as an ornament of American literature. Her satirical novel, *The Female Quixote,* was much read, and was honored with a dedication from the hand of Dr. Johnson. She was the author of several novels, of *Shakespeare Illustrated or Novels and Histories on which his plays are founded,* and of a variety of other literary efforts. (See Dict. of Nat. Biog.)

[3] Mrs. Morton, who was born in 1759, married Percy Morton, later Attorney-General of Massachusetts. She was early a contributor to the *Massachusetts Magazine* and became one of the chief adornments of a literary circle. Her verse is of an elegant and Della Cruscan insipidity.

with eleven different kinds and sizes of type. Her preface proclaims the purpose of the work "to expose the dangerous Consequences of Seduction and to set forth the advantages of female Education."

The story itself is more easily described by showing what it is intended to be than by trying to explain what it is. The personages of the tragedy obviously belong to types monotonously familiar in the fiction of the time. The lovely injured heroine is present in the person of Harriet Fawcet; Myra Harrington is the playful but warm-hearted confidante, Mrs. Francis, with whom Harriet lives as companion, the unfeeling relative, and Worthy is the sensible friend of the volatile hero. This hero, Harrington, originally intended for a gay young Lovelace, says of himself, at the outset of the narrative, that the moralist and the amoroso, sentiment and sensibility, are so interwoven in his constitution that "nature and grace are at continual fisticuffs." One glance of Harriet's eye, however, ends forever both the fisticuffs and his designs upon her peace of mind. Thereafter he exhibits, in happy combination, the thrilling sensibility of a Marianne Dashwood, with the erudite morality of a Mary Bennett. Animated by the spirit of the latter, he says of a dance to which he is to accompany Harriet: "These elegant relaxations prevent the degeneracy of human nature, exhilarate the spirits, and wind up this machine of ours for another revolution of business." Harriet and Harrington are at once betrothed, and the author is at liberty to turn to the real object of the work, sentimental and moral discussions of education, literature, and manners, with emphasis on the consequences of seduction, and anecdotes to point the moral. These discussions are carried on under the auspices of Mrs. Holmes, a "serious sentimentalist," devoted to rural retirement, who sits in one of the "temple" summer-houses dear to the "elegant female" of the eighteenth century, quoting Sterne and moralizing. Her part, that of the middle-aged patroness and adviser, is consistently carried out. After Mrs. Morton has preached her sermon, she enforces its precepts by the fate of her lovers. When Harrington insists on marrying Harriet, in spite of paternal opposition, his conscience-stricken father con-

fesses that Harriet is his sister. Harriet dies of a broken heart, in a lingering, graceful manner. A few days later Harrington is found slain by his own hand. On his table, beside his last will and testament, lies *The Sorrows of Werther.*[1]

The story is without construction or attempt at characterization. Its sentiment, a tepid infusion of Sterne, may be judged from Worthy's tribute to Myra's sampler: "'It is the work of Myra,' said I to myself. 'Did not her fingers trace these beautiful expanding flowers? Did she not give to this carnation its animated glow, and to this opening rose its languishing grace? Removed, as I am,' continued I, in a certain interior language that every son of nature possesses—'Removed as I am, from the amiable object of my tenderest affection, I have nothing to do but admire this offspring of industry and art. It shall yield more fragrance to my soul than all the boquets in the universe.'"

Of the many passages of attempted poetical style, the most elaborate are a Dante-inspired vision of the lower world shown to the guilty father, and the history of Fidelia, a pink-ribboned New England Ophelia, whose morbid interest in the brook is justified by the fact that her lover once drowned himself in it. Poems are also inserted in the text, a practice common in that period and particularly acceptable to Mrs. Morton who had been a poet before she became a novel writer. One extract from Harrington's epitaph, composed by himself, may illustrate the gift of the American Sappho.

> "When on their urn celestial care descends,
> Two lovers come, whom fair success attends,
> O'er the pale marble shall they join their heads,
> And drink the falling tears each other sheds,
> Then sadly say, with mutual pity mov'd,
> O! may we never love as these have loved."

Mrs. Susanna Haswell Rowson, whose most successful novel, *Charlotte Temple,* was published in 1790, had a more eventful

[1] The influence of the *Sorrows of Werther* on the mind of impulsive youth appears in many of our nearly novels, for example, in *The Hapless Orphan* and *The Letters of Ferdinand and Elizabeth,* and one tale, *The Slave of Passion, or the Fruits of Werther,* Philadelphia, 1802, is deliberately directed against this insidious evil.

career than Mrs. Morton. She was born in England, in 1762, but was brought to America four years later when her father, a naval officer on the American station, married an American lady, was retired, and settled at Nantasket. The hardships of the voyage were later described in *Rebecca.* The quiet life of the Haswell family was interrupted by the Revolutionary War. Mr. Haswell would not serve against the king, and consequently was regarded as a suspicious person, whose situation would make it easy for him to aid the king's ships. After some harrowing adventures, which appear in *Rebecca,* the Haswells were ordered to remove to Hingham, and the next year to Abington. Later they were allowed to go to Halifax, and thence to England.

In London Susanna's trials really began. To help in the struggle for maintenance, she became a governess. In 1786 she married, to please her family, her father's friend, William Rowson, who combined the activities of a hardware merchant with those of a trumpeter in the Royal Horse Guards. Mrs. Rowson's opinion of matrimony was never enthusiastically favorable. Nason, her biographer, sensibly observes that the warning prefixed to her *Sarah, or the Exemplary Wife,* "do not marry a fool," was probably the result of experience.[1]

In 1793, Mr. Rowson's business having completely failed, the stage was tried as a last resort. The Rowson family, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Rowson and a young sister of the former, appeared in the provinces for a season, apparently with no remarkable success, and were glad to obtain an engagement at the Chestnut Street Theater in Philadelphia. This brought Mrs. Rowson back to America where the rest of her life was spent. From 1793 to 1797 the Rowsons remained on the stage. During these years Mrs. Rowson, who had already published several novels, became a playwright as well as an actress.[2]

In Boston, in 1797, Mrs. Rowson began what was destined

[1] Elias Nason, *A Memoir of Mrs. Susanna Rowson with Elegant and Illustrative Extracts from her Writings in Prose and Poetry.* Albany, N. Y., 1870.

[2] One of her productions, a comedy, called *Americans in England, or Lessons for Daughters,* was presented at a benefit in 1797. Others were *The Female Patriot, The Volunteers,* and an opera, *Slaves in Algiers.*

to be a long and illustrious pedagogical career, with a school containing one pupil. By the end of the year she had a hundred scholars and a waiting list; "yet," her biographer exclaims with pardonable pride, "she suffered not the ink to dry upon her graceful pen." For the rest of her life she enjoyed a long-delayed prosperity. Her literary reputation made her the center of a group of learned ladies. In 1802 she became the editor of a new periodical, the *Boston Weekly Magazine.* Three years later this was superseded by the *Monthly Anthology,* to which she was a frequent contributor. To the *New England Galaxy,* started in 1815, she made contributions of a religious character. The most important of her works in prose were a series of papers modelled on the *Spectator,* and a serial novel, *Sincerity,* published, in 1813, as *Sarah, or the Exemplary Wife.* In 1804 her miscellaneous poems were published. She wrote much occasional verse, many recitations for the use of her scholars,[1] and some educational works in prose.[2] She died in 1824.

Mrs. Rowson's career as a novelist began in the year of her marriage. Her first novel *Victoria* appeared in 1786, followed the next year by *Mary, or the Test of Honour,* and in 1788 by *The Inquisitor, or the Invisible Rambler.* In 1790 *Charlotte Temple* was published. *Mentoria, or the Young Ladies Friend* (1791) embodied some of Mrs. Rowson's own experiences as a governess. Soon after appeared *Rebecca, or the Fille de Chambre.*

The earliest of Mrs. Rowson's works accessible in an American edition is *The Inquisitor or the Invisible Rambler,* professedly in the manner of Sterne. Mrs. Rowson, however, possessed little sentiment and no humor. The *Inquisitor,* her would-be sentimentalist, whose beneficent undertakings are furthered by a magic ring, suggests the able and efficient agent of a charity organization society. Indeed so admirable is his economy of effort, that if he rescues a betrayed and

[1] *A Present for Young Ladies containing Poems, Dialogues, Addresses . . . as Recited by the Pupils of Mrs. Rowson's Academy at the annual exhibition.* Boston, 1811.

[2] *Bible Dialogues between a Father and his Family,* Boston, 1822. *Exercises in History,* etc., Boston, 1822.

forsaken maiden, she is sure to be the long lost daughter of the penniless old soldier whom he had saved from insult the week before.

Charlotte Temple, a Tale of Truth (London, 1790, New York, 1794), established Mrs. Rowson's reputation, and still maintains it, although among a somewhat different class of readers. It is the story of a young girl, Charlotte Temple, or Stanley, who is lured away from a boarding school by a young officer and a wicked French governess, taken to New York, and abandoned to die in misery. Nothing that can heighten the sensational effect is spared,—two of the very blackest villains obtainable are employed to bring about the catastrophe. The question at once suggests itself—why should this story have survived, to linger out a dishonored old age in yellow paper covers, when all its equally harrowing contemporaries have long been forgotten? The answer lies in Mrs. Rowson's undeniable command of the sensational, and in the comparative simplicity and directness of the story itself.[1] There are many such tales, treated merely as episodes in Mrs. Rowson's other novels, which, if worked out separately with the same brevity and workmanlike construction, might have won the same reputation.

Lucy Temple, or the Three Orphans is the story of Charlotte's daughter. As Lucy Blakeney, she has been brought up in ignorance of her mother's history. She is about to marry a young man named Franklin when it is discovered, as in *The Power of Sympathy,* that he is the son of her mother's betrayer. The more practical bent of Mrs. Rowson appears in Lucy's decision to found a school instead of dying of a broken heart. The general tone of the novel is educational, in contrast to the pure sensationalism of *Charlotte.*

The Trials of the Human Heart (1795) is best described in the definition of a novel[2] given by the translator of *Alexis,*

[1] A more dignified reprint of the first edition has recently been issued, edited, with an introduction and a bibliography, by Francis W. Halsey, New York, 1905.

[2] *Alexis, or the Cottage in the Woods,* a novel from the French. Boston, 1796. (*Alexis: ou la Maisonnette dans les Bois.* . . . Par l'Auteur de Lolotte et Fanfan, Liège, 1790.)

"a concatenation of events which taken separately will be worthy of belief." In its four volumes horrors worthy of the tragedy of blood are seen domesticated in London. Mrs. Rowson's sensationalism differs from that of most of her contemporaries—from that of Mrs. Bennett for example—in its complete lack of romance. Her theme here, as in *Rebecca* and in *Sarah,* is the bitter struggle of a poor and friendless woman to maintain herself in a world in which her beauty and accomplishments are only added dangers. Meriel, the heroine, after years of vicissitudes, individually conceived with some crude force, but collectively incredible because of their number, emerges from the ordeal, apparently with not a curl displaced, to marry her first love.

In the choice of her horrors, and in the presentation of them, Mrs. Rowson is essentially a realist,[1] whose trick of giving vividness by touches of homely detail was probably learned from Richardson, who got it from Defoe. The description of the room furnished for Meriel by her benefactor, with its tent-bedstead and its box containing a piece of grey lutestring, and two pieces of dark chintz enough for a gown, and a piece of fine linen, resembles one of Pamela's conscientious catalogues. This crude realism of situation, without any corresponding truth of character, has given Mrs. Rowson a high place among successful exploiters of domestic melodrama, and it separates her didactic sensationalism from the more politely imaginative world of her "female" contemporaries.

Similar in its moral aim to *The Power of Sympathy* and *Charlotte Temple,* Mrs. Hannah Webster Foster's[2] *The Coquette* (1797) has neither the extreme sentimentality of Mrs. Morton nor the sensationalism of Mrs. Rowson. Like *Charlotte* it is founded on fact, on the unfortunate story of a

[1] In *Reuben and Rachel* (1798) Mrs. Rowson shows the more romantic influence of the increasing school of historical fiction. The tale, which seems to have been educational in intention, begins in the time of Columbus. Subsequently it describes the marriage of his granddaughter to a son of Lady Jane Grey, and of their son to an Indian princess, and of their son to a member of the Penn family.

[2] Hannah Foster, 1759–1840, was the wife of a Massachusetts minister, the Rev. John Foster. She was the author of *The Boarding School* (1796) and *Lessons of a Preceptress* (1798).

connection of the Foster family.[1] It is superior to its predecessors in interest and especially in character-drawing; the personages are individuals not types, speaking well in character, in letters as vivacious as the epistolary conventions of the time would allow. Some development can be traced in the character of the heroine, while the catastrophe is kept well in mind from the first. The virtuous hero is not represented as absolutely impeccable—although neither the heroine nor the author quite grasps the fact that he is an estimable prig—and the villain is allowed his softer side.

Of all the tales of these women novelists, *The Coquette* remains the most readable, and preserves a faded appeal to the sympathies of a public which has lost its taste for tragedy in letters. Early in the nineteenth century *The Coquette's* popularity rivalled that of *Charlotte.* Many editions were bought and wept over,[2] and a reprint was made as late as 1874.

Another example of the elegantly edifying type of fiction is Caroline Matilda Warren's novel, *The Gamesters; or, Ruins of Innocence* (1805). Presented to the public, the author says, "not as the labored production of erudition, but as the efforts of a mind rather of a contemplative turn, whose principal amusement is derived from such pursuits," it is, as the title indicates, directed against the evil of gambling. In addition to this main theme it points many other morals, and consequently has a more complicated action than *The Power of Sympathy* or *The Coquette.* Mrs. Warren makes some parade of her acquaintance with "polite authors," among whom it is a pleasure to find Shakespeare, and she seems to have had a fondness for the study of physiognomy inspired by Lavater. In a suicide scene there is the novelty of substituting Addison's *Cato* for the usual *Werther* opened at an appropriate passage. Another innovation is the introduction of Tom Tarpaulin, "an honest son of Neptune," and his sweetheart Peggy. Otherwise there is little that is new in this attempt to "blend instruc-

[1] The story is told at length in Mrs. C. H. Dall's *Romance of the Association,* 1875.

[2] The thirtieth appeared in Boston in 1833. Wegelin, *Early American Fiction,* 1902, p. 14.

tion with amusement, and at once to regale the imagination, and reform the heart."

More didactic, even pedagogic in intention, are two novels by Helena Wells, whose books were published in London. On the title page of *The Stepmother,*[1] the author is described as "of Charlestown, South Carolina." Both *The Stepmother* (1799) and *Constantia Neville, or the West Indian* (1800) went into second editions soon after their publication. Their aim, as stated in the preface to *The Stepmother,* "by pointing out the superior advantages of a religious education, is to counteract the pernicious tendency of modern philosophy," and to check the prevailing taste for "the marvellous and the terrible."

In a somewhat later work by Rebecca Rush, *Kelroy* (1812), the didactic novel, while retaining its moralizing tone, shows the influence of the novel of social manners. *Kelroy* owes, perhaps, to its later date, its comparative freedom from the naïve absurdities of many of its predecessors. Its style also, while still studied, has lost the excessive "elegance" of diction characteristic of Mrs. Morton's time.

One can hardly leave the subject of sentimental didacticism without referring to the *Massachusetts Magazine,* which was its shrine. Here the gifted ladies of Mrs. Morton's circle were sure of a welcome. The editor sometimes spoke sharply, in his acknowledgments to patrons and correspondents, of contributions from manly hands; but all ladies were received with a sugared politeness. Mrs. Morton, under her poetical name of Philenia, was referred to as "the Daughter of Genius—the Queen of elegance in thought and word and deed." Another lady, known as "Sabina," had contributed the history of a woman carried off by pirates to the harem of a Turkish noble, where her instructions led to the liberation of all the slaves. In recompense she received this editorial tribute: "Sabina, authoress of *Louisa,* an interesting novel, is sincerely thanked for a momentary renunciation of domestick labours. Her sex, her country, and mankind at large have reason to acknowledge

[1] *The Stepmother* was favorably reviewed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for July, 1800.

their obligation to the virtuous fair, who divide their time between family economy and the dissemination of universal instruction."

Long serial stories, except for occasional translations, are rare in periodicals before 1800, although many tales run through two or three issues. The space given to fiction, which in the *Massachusetts Magazine* is large, is occupied by various forerunners of the short story, the character, the anecdote, the apologue, and the condensed novel. The Oriental tale was the most favored of all types, and no issue of the *Massachusetts Magazine* was complete without one; very few, however, were of American origin. In original work this magazine made a specialty of "historiettes," tragic, sentimental, or amusing. Pastorals and bits of prose poetry were favorite efforts of the fair contributors, perhaps a touching scene from a projected novel. One of the most moving of these pastoral productions is *Fidele, or the Faithful Shepherd,* which appeared in 1791, signed by "Caloc." The Shepherd Fidele loves Zephyra; Almira, a town beauty, sees Fidele and falls into a decline for love of him. Her parents send for the shepherd, but he is already pledged to Zephyra. "His sensibility was too exquisite. The news of Almira's gradual decline preyed heavily on a slender constitution. Zephyra caught the weakening contagion, and three celestial spirits languished into life together." The mistress of this branch of poetic prose was "Lavinia." Other contributors were Laurinda, Alouette, Menander, Evander, and Lindor.

So much of this magazine work is left unsigned, so little scruple is felt at borrowing from foreign sources, or from one American magazine to another, that a formidable tangle of possible authorships awaits any venturesome person who may undertake to investigate the early American short story, or its forerunners. Although the *Massachusetts Magazine* virtuously declared that "all pieces which have been published in any other vehicle than the *Massachusetts Magazine* we deem *antique* composition," others did not share its fastidiousness; indeed the *New York Magazine* seems to have used its New England contemporary as a regular source of supply, and even

paid it the compliment of reprinting one story twice under different titles.

While the didactic sentimentality of Mrs. Morton, Mrs. Foster, and other Massachusetts ladies is the most striking feature of early American novel writing, other types, both of didacticism and of sentimentality, are to be found among the novelists of the day. The educational, the religious, and the satirical varieties of didacticism all are present. Consideration of these, however, may be postponed to that of the other variety of novel popular among the women writers of the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first of the nineteenth—the tale similar in quality of sentiment to those already discussed, but romantic where they are didactic, and aiming to amuse rather than to instruct.

This more romantic and less deliberately edifying type of female fiction[1] is well represented by *The Hapless Orphan, or Innocent Victim of Revenge,* "By an American lady" (1793). The orphan is a lovely and defenceless creature, afflicted with a hard-hearted relative,—a situation popular in the fiction of the time. This relative, an aunt, although "for her own child all the feelings of a parental bosom vegetated in luxuriance," is so unkind to the niece that the unfortunate Caroline is forced to seek another home. Hence arise all her difficulties, for at Princeton, whither she has fled, she falls in love with the miniature of a charming youth already betrothed to another, the jealous Eliza. At the tender moment when the youth, on his knee, is presenting to Caroline a locket adorned with a figure of Hope, and two doves drinking from a fountain, elegantly done in hair-work, which, he assures her, is his own "performance," the lovers are discovered by Eliza. After the suicide of the too attractive youth

[1] Among the tales of this type may be mentioned: *Cynthia, with the tragical account of the unfortunate loves of Almerin and Desdemona,* Northampton, Mass., 1798; *The Fortunate Discovery, or the History of Henry Villars,* New York, 1798; *Moreland Vale, or the Fair Fugitive,* New York, 1801; *Monima, or the Beggar Girl,* Philadelphia, 1803; *Margaretta,* Philadelphia, 1807. In a review in the *Massachusetts Magazine,* 1792, Vol. IV, p. 367, *The Hapless Orphan* is severely criticised, apparently for its lack of edifying tendency, and because the foibles of the aunt are "rather sneered at by stoical apathy than consoled in the language of sensibility."

the frantic Eliza vows vengeance. Thenceforth Caroline is hounded by every conceivable persecution,—pursuit by masked villains, by men in women's garments, slander, purloining of letters, attempted abduction, and more elaborate machinations affecting even the happiness of her friends, and successfully poisoning against her the mind of her betrothed who is at a distance fighting Indians.

The unreality of the tale is heightened by the absurd juxtaposition of blood-curdling plots, harrowing escapes, and prim discourses full of the self-centered, calculating common-sense which makes Caroline a true child of her century. "I had long established it a maxim of prudence and a dictate of reason," she says, "to make as easy as possible the various incidents which occur in this journey of life." Even when most occupied in foiling villains, she finds leisure for discourses on the necessity of education, and gentle Pamela-like moralizings, "Death, my dear Maria, is a serious event." The course of the narrative is impeded by her pauses to retail the private history of everyone she meets,—the young lady whose mind has been poisoned by too much novel-reading, the young man who is led by *The Sorrows of Werther* to shoot his disdainful fair one and then himself, the irate father who slays the brutal husband of his daughter and then falls into fits.

Caroline, herself, is not without sensibility,—"frequently," she tells us, "doth the great drop burst from my eye." She invariably retains her composure, however, even when her betrothed is killed in battle. Indeed, she soon begins to cast an eye of favor on an another suitor, Mr. Helen, but remarks, with her usual propriety, "great as my present partialities are, I should be disgusted with an immediate declaration of his attachment." Her arrangement to give funereal honors to the memory of her betrothed may serve as a sample of the "elegance" of the author's imagination:

"As a memento of my uniform attachment, I will cause a monument to be raised, on the base of which shall be represented, upon one side an urn which shall be supposed to contain the ashes of my friend, over which two cupids shall hold a cypress wreath; under the urn shall be displayed the fatal

trophies of war, while the figure of a female shall be seated under the friendly shade of a weeping willow, in a melancholy attitude, pointing to a number of angels that will be seen above. The urn shall be inscribed to friendship, bravery, and virtue. Upon the opposite side of the base an urn shall represent the sacred remains of my dear Lucretia, while a figure, whose eyes shall emit an insatiable revenge, shall hold in her hand a dart, which she is aiming at the bosom of a female who stands weeping over the ashes of her friend. At one end shall be engraved in capitals, *'SUPPRESS EVERY MOTIVE OF REVENGE.'"* After this tribute to the departed she accepts Mr. Helen.

At length the malevolent Eliza triumphs. Caroline is carried off by villains in Eliza's pay, and the devoted Helen, flying in pursuit, only arrives in time to save her body from a company of medical students. Nothing happens to Eliza.

Although the principle of poetic justice is violated in *The Hapless Orphan,* it usually governs the dénouements of tales of this class; the rejected lovers of the heroine console themselves with young ladies who have sighed in vain for the hero, and long-lost uncles reappear from strange lands, in time to endow all the principals with "handsome" fortunes, and the faithful attendants with "genteel" annuities. On the title page a "Lady of Quality" and the like have been replaced by "A Lady of Worcester County," "A Young Lady of the State of New York," or "A Lady of Philadelphia." In the tale itself nothing but the geographical situation is changed; the atmosphere is unreal, the lady is unfortunate, the hero is of a wax-work perfection, the villain is of a mechanical iniquity, just as in the numberless similar British romances.

The trials of this engaging type of heroine did not meet with universal compassion. In her *Female Quixotism exhibited in the Romantic Opinions and Extravagant Adventures of Dorcasina Sheldon* (1808), Mrs. Tabitha Tenney ridiculed the effect of such romantic tales on the mind of a country girl, much as Mrs. Lennox, fifty years before, had satirized, in her *Female Quixote,* the influence of the heroic romances of

the *Clélie* and *Cléopâtre* type. Mrs. Tenney's[1] heroine, who changes her homely appellation of Dorcas to Dorcasina, has been led to see a disguised hero in every horseboy, and a romance in every chance acquaintance. The story of her many disappointments and absurd mishaps, as a result of the credulity which makes her an ever ready dupe, is told with some humor; but the humor too often has the roughness and cruelty which in many of Smollett's practical jokes turns the reader's sympathies to the victim rather than to the perpetrator. Indeed, the chief distinction between Mrs. Lennox's satire and that of Mrs. Tenney is that one lived before, and the other after, Smollett.

Leaving this second type of feminine achievement, and turning to other varieties of didacticism, one finds first, in point of time, the educational tale represented by *The Memoirs of the Bloomsgrove Family* by the Reverend Enos Hitchcock, D.D.[2] (1790). This learned author, after serving through the Revolutionary War as a chaplain, had acquired fame as a preacher. His purpose in novel writing was not only didactic but patriotic; to furnish a system of education suited to American conditions was his design. This is accomplished in a series of letters describing the training of the youthful Osander and Rozella Bloomsgrove under the supervision of their humane and enlightened parents. Incidentally, the views on education of Rousseau, Locke, Lord Kaimes, Mrs. Chapone, and Mme. de Genlis are weighed and sifted. The educational effect of dressing dolls is solemnly discussed—for the author was convinced that "females should inure themselves to the exercise of thinking."[3] His acquaintance with eighteenth century fads appears in the little didactic Oriental tales which occasionally

[1] Tabitha Tenney was born in Exeter, N. H., in 1762. In 1788 she married Samuel Tenney who in 1800 became a member of Congress. She died in Exeter in 1837.

[2] The Rev. Enos Hitchcock was born in Springfield, Mass., in 1744, and died in Providence, R. I., in 1803. He was graduated from Harvard in 1767, and became a chaplain in the Revolutionary army in 1780. He published, beside his novels, a *Treatise on Education*, Boston, 1790, and *Catechetical Instructions and Forms of Devotion for Children and Youth*, 1788.

[3] A different view was taken by the writer who, in 1792, contributed to the *American Museum*, Vol. XI, lines addressed to a lady who had desired

point his morals, and in the enthusiasm for landscape gardening shown in his descriptions of the Bloomsgrove domain, with its lawn, and summer-house, and paths running in a "vermicular direction." Of his style an example is furnished by his paraphrase of the speech of the Mother of the Gracchi, which he expands to a more elegant form. "These, my good friends," Cornelia says, "are my ornaments and all that I have of a toilet."

In 1793 Hitchcock published a work of a like improving tendency, *The Farmer's Friend, or the History of Mr. Charles Worthy,* designed to show the progressive steps by which an individual can rise by his own struggles.

Similarly edifying in purpose is *The Art of Courting,* which shows characteristics both of the educational and of the religious tale, but differs from both in its avowed intention to "impress the minds of young people with a lively sense of the love and favor of heaven in granting to the human race the institution of marriage, which is so admirably calculated to promote their improvement, pleasure, and happiness." "The delightful business of courting" is the theme of the work, and is illustrated, the author says, by "several instances of courtship not unworthy of the imitation of the American youth."[1]

Seven typical courtships are followed out in detail by means of the letters of the lovers and an explanatory narrative by the author. These include a didactic courtship, a religious courtship, the courtship of an old maid and an old bachelor, of a widower and a widow, of an old man and a young girl, the courtship of Braggadocius and Numskuldia, inserted not for example but for warning, and finally, as a crowning triumph,

the establishment of a university for women. Of the blighting effect of science he says:

"At her approach the roses fade,
Each charm forsakes the astonished maid;
And o'er her cheek of sickly pale,
Thought slowly draws its loathsome veil."

[1] Of this work the *Massachusetts Magazine* remarks, 1796 (Vol. VIII, p. 68), "Here is nothing of the delicate demeanor and gentle affection, none of the tender sensibilities or winning attention, and little of the modest innocence or chaste reservedness which bespeak a refined attachment."

the conversion, through love, of Damon, who had been a charming youth but a " finished deist."

The narrative is enlivened by the insertion of verses, the composition of various lovers. Of them all the following tribute from Oliva to Emilius is perhaps the most touching:

> " The beauties of the blooming spring,
> Fresh to my mind Emilius bring,
> The flowers which give a fragrant smell,
> Do emulate his virtues well."

The inspiration, if so it may be called, to this undertaking probably came from Defoe's popular work on *Religious Courtship,* but there is a great difference not only in form, the substitution of letters for dialogues, but in feeling and style, both of which have the sentimentality and fondness for ornament of contemporary fiction, rather than the precision and matter of fact qualities of Defoe. Any connection there may be between *The Art of Courting* and the *Religious Courtship* is one of suggestion rather than of close imitation.

In addition to the educational and the religious, the satirical form of didacticism, which gave rise to the large family of eighteenth century Quixotes, is represented in America by Hugh Henry Brackenridge's[1] *Modern Chivalry:* containing the *Adventures of Captain John Farrago and Teague O' Regan his Servant.* This story, which displays more ability than any other American tales before those of Charles Brockden Brown, describes the travels of a thoughtful man whose ideas of life have been derived entirely from books. He is accompanied by

[1] Hugh Henry Brackenridge was born in 1748, in Scotland, but came to America when five years old. His boyhood was spent on a farm in York County, Pa., where he managed to obtain an education. By teaching school he earned the money necessary for study at Princeton, and was graduated in 1771 with James Madison and Philip Freneau. He continued at the college as a tutor, studied divinity, and later taught in an academy in Maryland where he composed a dramatic poem, *Bunker's Hill,* recited by his pupils, and published in 1776. He became editor of the *United States Magazine* in 1776. After serving as chaplain in the war, he studied law at Annapolis. In 1781 he moved to Pittsburg, and later became a member of the Legislature. He was much interested in the Whiskey Rebellion and in 1795 published *Incidents of the Insurrection in the Western Part of Pennsylvania in 1794.* In 1799 he was made judge of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. He died in 1816.

an ignorant Irish servant, half-fool, half-knave, who by constantly getting into difficulties affords a text for satirical moralizings by his master.

In the earlier portions the satirical note is more sustained, and the adventures follow a fixed plan. At each stage of their journey the Captain and his servant fall in with some foolish assemblage, now of scientists seeking recruits for their society, now of citizens about to elect a representative, and the like. Each foolish group finds something to admire in the foolish and vain Teague O'Regan, and offers him membership or office. To prevent his acceptance the Captain is obliged to invent ridiculous objections, and then follows a chapter of reflections by the author, suggested by the previous adventure. This order, however, is gradually abandoned toward the end of the first part of the story, and is not resumed in the second. After a visit to Philadelphia, where Teague is a social success and an idol of young ladies, he has an interview with the President, and is led to expect political preferment. At last he obtains the office of exciseman. In that capacity he becomes involved in the Whiskey Rebellion, is tarred and feathered by indignant citizens, captured by a scientific society, caged as a strange animal, and finally sent to France where, in the character of an Esquimau, he figures in the train of Anacharsis Cloots.

The second part of the story, added later, is devoted to the description of a new settlement founded by the Captain and his friends, the governmental problems which arise being mere pretexts for long chapters setting forth Brackenridge's political beliefs. The relief given by comic adventure and satiric reflection to the educational intention of the first part is often lacking here, and there is no real plot.

At his best Brackenridge shows great satiric power, and a vigor and clearness of style unusual in that day of somewhat tawdry elegance in fiction. Although he took the form of his narrative from Cervantes, he is nearer Butler in spirit. Indeed it was his original intention to put his story into Butler's jolting couplets, and a beginning was actually made, but he finally abandoned the idea and adopted the prose form for his narrative.

Another popular *genre* in the British fiction of the day, allied with the romantic rather than the didactic novel, was the tale of adventurous travel, whose rise is due partly to the influence of Smollett, partly to that of the books of travel and description which were being produced in considerable quantity. This type is early represented in America by two novels, both of which appeared in 1797, and both of which deal in part with the Algerine pirates, then a serious menace to commerce, as well as a picturesque peril appealing to many purveyors of light literature. Although, in so far as they possess the elements of action and enterprise, these two tales have a relationship with the adventure novels to be discussed in a later chapter, they have elements, one of the sentimental, the other of the didactic type, sufficient to give them a place here. Similar as are their subjects, the two authors employ quite opposite methods of treatment; one follows the traditional romance of high-born captives and gory-minded captors, while the other attempts an iconoclastic realism.

Fortune's Football, or, the Adventures of Mercutio possesses all the hairbreadth escapes, the rapid succession of improbable situations, familiar in the modern novel of this type, but differs from it in the share in the conduct of affairs assigned to the hero. As the title implies, Mercutio is the sport of fortune, not its master. Things happen to him; he does not make them happen to other people. Even the passion of love, which nerves the modern hero to many interesting impossibilities, has no such stimulating effect on Mercutio. As each object of his affections is snatched from him by death, he sheds a few tears, and replaces her by another even more desirable. Of him, far more truly than of Sir Charles Grandison, may it be said, "all the world is *his* Emily." Of perils by land and sea he has an endless series, once, indeed, owing his preservation to the humble agency of a friendly hen-coop. On another occasion his ship remains stuck between two rocks in mid-sea for five days, to the great annoyance of the passengers. In Venice he elopes with the Doge's daughter and an ebony box crammed full of ducats, while his final exploit is the conversion of the Sophi of Persia to monogamy and English

cavalry tactics. The progress of the story is constantly interrupted by Mercutio's reunions with various long-lost friends, including an earl and a retired highwayman. The main narrative is abandoned while each friend recounts the tale of his adventures during his separation from the hero, thus causing a dislocation of the course of events. Mercutio's captivity among the pirates, although short, is as harrowing as his other experiences; he is chained to an oar and forced to row night and day. Among his fellow prisoners he finds equals and friends whose plight, like his own, is viewed as a romantic hardship.

In *The Algerine Captive,* on the other hand, Royall Tyler has a more didactic purpose. After devoting the first part of his book to a satirical account of New England customs, he gives a serious picture of the terrors of a slave-ship. Finally, when he brings his hero to Algiers, he ridicules the romantic ideas of Algerian slavery generally derived from books, and gravely applies himself to a somewhat tedious account of actual conditions. "I am loath," he says, "to destroy the innocent gratifications which the readers of novels or plays derive from the works of a Behn and a Colman; but the sober character of the historian compels me to assure my readers that, whatever may have happened in the sixteenth century, I never saw during my captivity a man of any rank, family, or fortune among the menial slaves." Tyler's style was clear and correct, without ornamentation or artificiality, very well fitted for story telling. Unfortunately, however, a flood of information submerged whatever story he may have meant to tell.

Not one of these early novels, with the possible exception

[1] Royall Tyler was born in Boston in 1756, was of the class of 1776 at Harvard, and studied law with John Adams. He served for some time in the army. His comedy, *The Contrast,* was acted in 1786. The next year he produced *May Day, or New York in an Uproar.* To the *Farmer's Weekly Museum,* and other papers, he contributed numerous productions "from the shop of Messrs. Colon and Spondee," and to the *Port Folio,* in 1801, a series of *An Author's Evenings.* In the same year some of his *Farmer's Museum* papers were collected and published. He composed much occasional verse, and contributed to various periodicals, including the *New England Galaxy.* In 1800 he was made Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Vermont, and held the office for several years. He died in 1812.

of *Modern Chivalry,* whether intended for edification or for amusement, can claim any enduring literary merit, or any real originality. All belong to types common in contemporary British fiction, and many of them seem to be put forward in a tentative and apologetic spirit. This very amateurishness gives many of them a naïvely amusing quality, and seems to have been a source of innocent pride to some of the compatriots of their authors. At a time when American fiction was for a few years, at least, represented by a professional man of letters, Charles Brockden Brown, we find a plea for the amateur prefixed by Mrs. Wood's Baltimore publisher to her *Ferdinand and Elmira* (1804). The "advertisement" to the work announces that "the writer of this instructive and amusing work has heretofore published the effusions of her Pen in New England; and there, where the flights of fancy (as if chilled by the frigid blasts of the north) are not received with that friendly welcome which they receive in the south and middle states, commanded that applause which Genius and fancy never fail of producing on those liberal and candid minds who will take the trouble to discriminate between the ordinary day-labor of the common English novelist, who works for a living, similar to a mechanic, and has no other end in view than to bring forth a fashionable piece of Goods, that will suit the taste of the moment and remunerate himself, and the Lady of refined sentiments and correct taste, who writes for the amusement of herself, her friends, and the public."

The zeal for novel reading which underlay this zeal for novel-writing appears in the number of small towns or cities in which the earliest American novels were published. Before 1800 novels of native authorship had been printed in Newburyport, Northampton, Leominster, Hallowell, Dedham, Walpole, and Portsmouth. In other towns the most popular British novels were reprinted, and many, of course, were imported directly. While the American tales were usually kept at a medium price, the British varied greatly in cost, so that no thirst for fiction need have remained ungratified. The extravagant could obtain *The Beggar Girl and her Benefactors* for three dollars; the frugal might console themselves with *The*

Man of Real Sensibility for thirty-seven and a half cents. Although this eager consumption of British fiction was deprecated by the patriotic American novelist, it must have suggested alluring possibilities of success.

Any attempt to sum up the importance of these early exercises in the didactic and the sentimental must give results chiefly negative. What their direct moral influence was, cannot be ascertained. It is certain, however, that they did not supplant British fiction in the affections of the reading public. Nor did they give any adequate expression to American life and ideals. Again they cannot be said to have great importance as evidence of an incipient literary culture. That culture was already showing itself in the cultivation of other literary forms. And although the authors of didactic fiction were often connected with self-conscious literary groups, they did not approach the novel from the point of view of art. The function of the novel, in their estimation, was almost entirely utilitarian. It is a significant fact that nearly all the directly didactic novels are by known writers—writers of literary or educational importance in their day—while, on the other hand, the stories designed chiefly for amusement, but related to their didactic contemporaries by similarity of sentiment and manner, are almost invariably by unknown authors. Apparently a novelist without a definite lesson to impart did not venture to appear in person before the public. The attitude of even the most edifying story tellers is apologetic. Such an attitude toward novel writing was not likely to bring about a search for new material in actual human experience or a more artistic handling of the well worn themes already in use.

These early novelists, in spite of their common aims, represent no concerted movement; they do not even form a group possessing any real unity. They discovered no new or characteristic type of novel, but sought their models in the very British fiction whose influence they were trying to destroy. Unfortunately, they followed the methods of British fiction in its most uninspired and uninspiring period. From these British models they derived the didacticism which is the guiding spirit of the novels brought together in this chapter. But

many of these novels show also the influence of other aspects of contemporary thought. Consequently, although it is convenient to consider them as one large group characterized by the didactic and sentimental strain, it would be possible, with equal consistency, to divide them into a number of small groups, several of which would consist of one novel each.

However considerable as was their accomplishment from the point of view of literary merit they have a certain interest as documents in the history of taste. For their authors, and presumably their readers, were of the cultivated class, of the class which would consciously seek what is supposed to be the best. More than this, it should be remembered that to introduce novel writing to America at all was an achievement of real importance. Although the Gothic novel, the historical romance, and other newer forms of fiction followed in a very few years, the honor of leading the way in the new field belongs to the already old fashioned novel of the didactic Richardsonian tradition.

CHAPTER II

The Gothic and the Revolutionary

The period of amiable amateurishness with which American fiction began, was followed by the popularity of the first really gifted American novel-writer, the first also whose name has won the adornment of tags in the handbooks of literary history —Charles Brockden Brown, variously known as "The First American Novelist," "The Father of American Fiction," "The First American Man of Letters." Brown's novels, however, are separated from those of his predecessors less by professional handling or technical skill than by the new ideals of literature and life which they represent. In England, as in America, sentimental and didactic fiction was still produced in quantity, but the fashion of the hour at which Brown wrote was the Gothic.

Although the history of the Gothic novel goes back to 1764, when Horace Walpole had a bad dream and wrote *The Castle of Otranto*, the possibilities of the new type were not appreciated until the growing spirit of romanticism found itself in serious sympathy with the mediæval machinery and supernatural terrors which Walpole may have invented partly in a spirit of flippancy. The triumphant vogue of the Gothic novel is the peculiar glory of Mrs. Anne Radcliffe whose *Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, published in 1789, was followed by *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), *The Italian* (1797). Her thrilling tales found so many imitators that after 1790 the Gothic novel may fairly be said to have reigned in English fiction. Owls hooted; trap-doors yawned; ghosts in armour walked the floor with a spectral clank; damsels swooned on secret staircases; balls of fire rolled around the best regulated houses; mysterious figures in inky cloaks waited at dark corners to pluck impetuous heroes by

the sleeve and bid them "beware"; she was but a poor and old-fashioned heroine who had not been kidnapped to a mysterious castle, forced by a heartless parent to dwell in a ruined abbey, or, at the least, immured in a remote convent.

During this period, however, the Gothic romance took so many forms that the precise application of the descriptive adjective is not always apparent. The essence of the "Gothic" may be said to consist, if one may parody a well-worn phrase, in the addition of strangeness to terror. The variations of this type fall, with more or less coercion, into three groups: the supernatural Gothic of Walpole and Lewis, the mechanical or architectural Gothic of Mrs. Radcliffe, and the psychological or Revolutionary Gothic of William Godwin, which united certain characteristics of the "Gothic" and of the "Revolutionary" novels. It is from Godwin that Brown received the impulse to write the first American novels that possess any real merit.

Born in Philadelphia, in 1771, the descendant of a family of Friends who had come over with Penn, Brown was a frail child, unable to play with other boys, and consequently early addicted to books. His biographer[1] relates that even as an infant he would be found musing over the page with all the gravity of a student, and that, when he was still a child of ten, "thinking, which is to the uncultivated so laborious and irksome an occupation, became to him the most delightful of employments." As a schoolboy he tried his hand at both verse and prose, and at the early age of sixteen he had planned three epics, all on American subjects,—for the serene consciousness of national achievement which filled the country at that time was always strong in Brown.

At the end of his school days he did not allow the study of the law, upon which he then entered, to interrupt this state of "intellectual revelry"—he found time to join a debating

[1] The biography by his friend, William Dunlap, lacks the definiteness of modern biographical writing, but it makes accessible many fragments of Brown's works. (Philadelphia, 1815.) Dunlap's *History of the American Theatre* (New York, 1832) contains many references to Brown and his friends. See also W. H. Prescott's *Biographical and Critical Miscellanies* (1834).

society, to keep a journal which was a minute record of his thoughts, and feelings, and even of his letters, and to study English authors with the definite purpose of improving his style. He became one of the founders and chief ornaments of a literary society, the Belles Lettres Club, and made his first appearance in print, in a series of essays contributed to the *Columbian Magazine,* in which, his biographer says, "he presented himself to the world in the character of a rhapsodist." On the completion of his studies Brown could not conquer his dislike to the practice of law, with what he later described as "its endless tautologies, its impertinent conceits, its lying assertions and hateful artifices," and he displayed considerable ingenuity in the preparation of conscientious reasons for declining it.

Brown at this period seems to have been an earnest, rather over-read, young man, much given to somewhat morbid introspection, and with a slightly priggish loathing of the "common pursuits and common topics of men," acquainted with all the literary and political fads of the day, and desirous of immediately settling "the relations, dependencies, and connections of the several parts of knowledge." As a friend declined to perform the latter task he decided to undertake it himself. His devotion to literature, however, was real and enlightened. The romantic gloom and self-torture, the corroding sorrows, latent anguishes, and thoughts of suicide which leaked from his diary, where he meant to confine them, into his letters, were in part the result of youthful morbidness, and in part an expression of the self-analytical spirit of the day.

For the next few years he was without definite occupation, but seems to have considered himself in training for literature. Repeated visits to New York made him acquainted with friends of tastes thoroughly congenial with his own. At length he made his home there, and lived at first with Dunlap and afterward with Dr. Elihu Hubbard Smith. Here he seems to have done some magazine work, and to have found spiritual refreshment in the meetings of the Friendly Club, a literary society which held weekly discussions and published a review. The minds of the group were excited by the political and social

speculation, and the generous enthusiasm, with which the French Revolution was filling the air. They sought "a plan to improve and secure human happiness," and, like most of the ardent young spirits of the time, evidently, looked to William Godwin as the inspired high-priest of political wisdom. Like Godwin they traced the errors of society to institutions.

It was probably as a result of these discussions that Brown wrote, and in 1797 published, his *Alcuin,* a dialogue on marriage. This work reflects many of Godwin's views, and discusses questions of the position and education of women which were present with Brown all his life. In other ways, also, the society in which he found himself must have been stimulating to Brown. He was surrounded by young men whose literary activity and ambitions were eager and sincere, although their actual accomplishment was not remarkable. His closest companions, Dunlap and Smith, were engaged in different kinds of literary work. Although Smith published little not concerned with his profession, except an opera, *Edwin and Angelina,* presented in 1796, he is said by Dunlap to have written many sonnets and poems. Dunlap's services to the American stage as author, translator, manager, and later as historian, are well known. His industry as a translator and producer of sensational German dramas, especially those of Kotzebue, may have helped to bring about Brown's sympathetic attitude toward German literature.[1] However that may be, it is evident that Dunlap's friendship and example must have done much to stir Brown's literary ambitions into action.

After the publication of *Alcuin* Brown began, as he writes in his journal, "something in the form of a romance." Of this attempt he says: "When a mental comparison is made between this and the mass of novels, I am inclined to be pleased with my own production. But when the objects of comparison are changed, and I revolve the transcendent merits of *Caleb Williams,* my pleasure is diminished, and is preserved from total extinction only by the reflection that this performance is my first." This work was never finished and never received a

[1] For Brown's interest in German literature see F. H. Wilkens, *Early Influence of German Literature in America,* p. 37–39.

title. According to Brown's usual system of nomenclature it should have been called *Colden, or the Mysterious Boarder.*

In 1798 the yellow fever broke out in New York. Although he had left Philadelphia in 1793 to escape the epidemic, Brown decided to rely on a systematic diet for protection, and remained in New York. The diet, possibly the hasty-pudding and water recommended in *Ormond,* did not justify his confidence; the household was stricken with the fever; Brown was very ill, and Smith died. Brown thus saw all the horrors of the disease, and gathered material for the most successful portion of his novels, realizing, as he afterwards remarked, that the events of the epidemic had been full of instruction to the moral observer.

The first of Brown's novels to be actually published was *Wieland, or the Transformation* (1798). An untoward fate had overtaken the previously completed *Sky Walk, or the Man Unknown to Himself.* It was actually in type, when the printer's death was followed by disagreements with his executor which prevented the publication of the tale.

At this time Brown, whose methods of work were somewhat erratic, had five novels in hand at once. Of these, three appeared in 1799,—*Arthur Mervyn,* which was first published as a serial in the *Weekly Magazine, Edgar Huntly, or Memoirs of a Sleep Walker,* and *Ormond, or the Secret Witness.* In April, 1799, Brown, who had fallen an early victim to the enthusiasm for magazine publishing which was over-running American literature,[1] brought out his *Monthly Magazine and American Review.* This short-lived periodical expired late in the year 1800. It shows interest in German literature, and in scientific subjects, and contains fragments of Brown's works, a specimen of *Edgar Huntly, Thessalonica,* a formless, pseudo-historical short story, and several installments of the unfinished *Memoirs of Stephen Calvert.*

In 1801 appeared his last two novels, *Jane Talbot* and *Clara Howard.* Both of these are as different from Brown's earlier tales as is *Fleetwood* from *Caleb Williams.*

[1] For Brown's magazine work see A. H. Smyth, *The Philadelphia Magazines and their Contributors.* Philadelphia, 1892.

In 1803 Brown returned to magazine work as editor of the *Literary Magazine and American Register,* "replete," Dunlap says, "with the effusions of erudition, taste, and genius." To this was added in 1806 the editorship of the *American Register.* During these busy years Brown, who had married and returned to Philadelphia, found time for little outside his magazine work, except for the publication of a few political pamphlets on questions of immediate interest. But he also wrote a life of his brother-in-law, John Blair Linn, made a translation of Volney, had in preparation a "system of geography" which was left unfinished at his death, and is said to have made "considerable progress in a work on Rome during the Age of the Antonines, similar to Anacharsis' Travels in Greece." Novel-writing he had apparently given up, although the success of his early tales seems to have been considerable, both in England and in America.

Brown died in 1810 after a lingering illness, bravely endured. He seems to have had the gift of attaching his friends warmly to him, and to have produced on all who were brought into contact with him an impression of intellectual ability and uprightness of character.

Brown's magazine work and his political writings, although considerable in quantity and esteemed by him the serious occupation of a life to which novel-writing was only a distraction, have done nothing to keep his name alive. To his novels he owes the distinction of being, if not still read, at least, still talked about—of being condemned as a sensation-monger on the one hand, and on the other extolled as a forerunner of Hawthorne. Of the six novels which Brown completed the first three, *Wieland, Ormond,* and *Arthur Mervyn,* show more directly the influence of *Caleb Williams.* All these tales are characterized by an exaggerated romantic individualism—they are concerned with men whose powers, whether for good or evil, are abnormal. The crimes and horrors which lend an element of external terror, making *Caleb Williams* "captivatingly frightful" to Mrs. Inchbald, are not in themselves the end of the story—they are the effect of a strong personality brought, either by force of external circumstance or by some element of its own nature, into conflict with its environment.

In Brown's novels the logic of events, however, is often destroyed by the carelessness of the composition. The author, who generally had several novels in process of construction at the same time, would send portions of a tale to the printer before he had planned the rest of the story. The result was that he apparently forgot what he had written in one installment and consequently neglected to follow it up in the next. He is never able to make a situation as clear and simple as that which Godwin achieved in *Caleb Williams*. Caleb's story, when stripped of all the didactic reflections on the administration of legal justice, on the system of landlords, the condition of prisons,—in short, of all the passages in which William Godwin, the serene and stodgy minor prophet, pushes aside Caleb Williams, the hunted, defiant, remorseful boy,—describes the conflict of two persistent natures each driven by its ruling passion, the one by curiosity, the other by the worldly conception of honor.

The story of Caleb Williams may be summarized briefly. Caleb, a lad of unusual ability, the son of a small farmer, has become the secretary of Falkland, his landlord. In his anxiety to discover the cause of fits of melancholy and insane wandering which at times affect the benevolent and accomplished Falkland, Williams is led to believe that his patron is really guilty of a murder for which he has once been tried and acquitted. Henceforth his passionate curiosity, to whose satisfaction, he says, he would have sacrificed liberty and life, leads him to attempt every means to discover the truth. Falkland comes upon Williams in the act of lifting the cover of a mysterious chest, and in a passion of impatience tells all the story of his guilt, and his determination to hide it at any cost. Williams still loves and admires his master, whom he considers criminal only through the force of circumstances acting on his really noble qualities. But Falkland distrusts his devotion, maddens him by a petty tyranny of suspicion, and drives him to an attempted flight. Caleb is captured, and imprisoned on a charge of theft arranged by Falkland.

Williams escapes from prison, but is prevented by Falkland's emissaries from leaving the country. In London he lives the

life of a hunted creature, constantly recognized by Falkland's spies and driven to new disguises, until he is seized and taken before a magistrate. Maddened by the long-drawn terror of his hiding, he denounces Falkland, only to be reproached with adding lying to theft. Falkland appears and tells Williams that the apparent persecution was only a test of the lad's fidelity to his oath, a test in which he has failed. Henceforth, wherever he goes, he will always be in his patron's power, and always be pursued by his revenge. To Falkland reputation is the dearest thing on earth; therefore his revenge will be to take reputation from Williams.

Thereafter Williams is followed from place to place by emissaries of Falkland, who, by spreading the story of his theft and ingratitude, make him an outcast from each community that has sheltered him. Deprived of his livelihood, his friends, his betrothed, he forgets the reverence for Falkland which has persisted through all his sufferings, returns to his native place, and brings a solemn accusation against his former master. Confronted with the feeble, almost dying, Falkland, Williams is overcome with grief for what he has done. Falkland, convinced too late of Caleb's sincerity, praises his heroic patience, acknowledges the crime, and dies. Godwin leaves his hero a prey to eternal remorse, dramatically inquiring, "of what use are talents and sentiments in the corrupt wilderness of human society?"

The faults of the book include the usual Godwinian preaching and pomposity, as well as the high-flown exaggeration of sentiment common in the fiction of the time and no peculiarity of Godwin or of Brown, although distressingly present in both. The most striking merit is the vivid representation of certain mental states, and the skill with which the narrative is built up. The book is often called the ancestor of the modern detective story but the relationship is certainly remote.[1] The detection of the crime is accomplished in the first few pages. Thereafter the interest of the tale is, on the one hand, in the

[1] For discussion of *Caleb Williams* by Poe and Dickens see J. H. Ingram, *Edgar Allen Poe, His Life, Letters, and Opinions,* London, 1886, p. 153, and *E. A. Poe's Works,* Edinburgh, 1890, Vol. IV, p. 129.

darkness of Falkland's mind, blackened by guilt to an insanity of remorse, yet still commanding and still noble, and, on the other, in the slow torment of Caleb's life, the sense of being watched and followed, of the imminence of an inexorable power, the final animal instinct to turn on the pursuer. In this combination of the sensational and the analytic it is the wreck of the mind, and not the shedding of blood, that gives the element of terror.

Wieland, Brown's first published novel, is, like *Caleb Williams,* autobiographical in form. The narrator is Clara Wieland, a young woman of the educated and independent type then just appearing in fiction. Like Caleb Williams, and like most of Brown's other personages, she begins by lamenting the singularity of her fate—" the experience of no human being can furnish a parallel; that I beyond all the rest of mankind should be reserved for a destiny without alleviation and without example." She then describes the Wieland family, peaceful, cultured, rather pedantic, dwelling tranquilly on the banks of the Schuylkill. Their favorite gathering place is " what to the common eye would seem a summer-house," but is in reality a temple built by the older Wieland, a religious monomaniac, who in that very temple had died a mysterious death, apparently by spontaneous combustion. In spite of the associations of the place the family meet there daily, and pass happy hours discussing the latest German poetry, comparing texts of Cicero, " turning over the Della Crusca dictionary," and " bandying quotations and syllogisms."

This learned peace is soon disturbed by the arrival of a mysterious stranger, Carwin, a travelling acquaintance of Wieland's brother-in-law, Pleyell. Carwin's strange personality and expressive voice have a fascination for Clara, which she for a time mistakes for the " first inroads of a passion incident to every female heart." Mysterious voices are heard around the temple; Wieland, on his way thither, hears his wife warning him away,—yet on returning to the house finds that she has not left her chair. A voice in the dark warns Clara of a power that would injure her, and promises protection. Strange voices are heard quarreling at night in the house in

which Clara lives alone with her maid, and when she, fleeing, falls senseless on her brother's threshold, a voice of more than mortal power calls the household to her aid. Not content with establishing a supernatural reign of terror, the mysterious power convinces Clara's lover, Pleyell, of her faithlessness, by causing him to hear her voice making the most disgraceful avowals to another.

In disgust, Pleyell hastily decides to return to Germany, and Clara vainly pursues to dissuade him. On her return she finds that her brother has succumbed to the family tendency to insanity, and, at the instigation of the mysterious voices, has killed his wife and all his children as a divinely demanded sacrifice. After a long illness in another city Clara returns to her house for a farewell visit. There she is confronted with Carwin, who acknowledges that, by what he calls biloquialism or ventriloquialism, he has himself been the author of the mysterious voices. Wieland, who has escaped from prison, now appears and prepares to finish his task by the sacrifice of Clara. In order to dissuade him from the deed Carwin again assumes the mysterious voice. At its rebuke Wieland suddenly recovers from his insanity, realizes what he has done, and stabs himself. Carwin escapes. The story does not follow his adventures further, but devotes a few pages to the fate of Clara, who finally becomes the wife of Pleyell. In the last paragraph a moral is drawn, somewhat abruptly, from the events of the tale.

The story is obviously of a more sensational type than *Caleb Williams*—indeed the use of supernatural clap-trap is a reminder, at least, of Mrs. Radcliffe—but the agency itself is far different from her trap-doors and mechanical devices. Instead of these Brown uses a natural, but to him mysterious and awful, power,—that control over the voice which he calls biloquialism, much as a novelist of to-day might use hypnotism. The part played by Carwin as instigator of Wieland's crimes is apparently without motive; indeed Carwin's character and history receive no adequate explanation in the novel, which is really an episode connected with the unfinished *Memoirs of Carwin, the Biloquist,* rather than an independent work.

Of these *Memoirs* only the story of the hero's early youth and education was completed. Carwin, a youth of considerable natural ability, but chiefly remarkable for his skill in ventriloquism, attracts the attention of a distinguished and mysterious Englishman, Ludloe, who takes Carwin back to Europe with him. There Carwin is treated with affectionate indulgence, is gradually led to share Ludloe's views on the ills of society, and finally is taught the justness of dissimulation for a worthy cause. Carwin is then sent to Spain to study man and human institutions, practising "a system of deceit pursued merely from the love of truth." During his stay in Spain Carwin frequently exercises his "bi-lingual" power, yet still conceals its possession from Ludloe, although he has pledged himself to report every detail of his life.

On Carwin's return to England, Ludloe gradually acquaints him with the existence of a political association engaged in a great and arduous design, and leads him to desire to join it. The secret object of the association is not told, but Carwin discovers an atlas with a map of an unknown island country, and perceives that the founding of a new civilization in that place must be Ludloe's hope. Ludloe offers to make Carwin a member of the association, but insists on the dangers of undertaking the task lightly, the entire devotion required, the destruction sure to follow a breach of secrecy, and, above all, the absolute necessity of a complete confession of every detail of his past life. Carwin, although confessing everything else, and although aware that Ludloe has an unaccountable familiarity with his past actions, persists in concealing his biloquial achievements. Ludloe, evidently unsatisfied, promises him another opportunity to continue his confessions. At this point the story breaks off. From Carwin's account of himself in *Wieland* it appears that he has in some way lost Ludloe's favor, has been imprisoned on charges invented by him, and has escaped to America.

This dream of an ideal commonwealth beyond the sea was the most persistent result of Brown's early political speculations. It appears again in *Ormond,* in *Arthur Mervyn,* in the fragment of the story of Colden, and in the few pages con-

cerning the mysterious Italian, Adini. And Dunlap explains the fragmentary *Sketches of the History of Carsol* and the *Sketches of the History of the Carrils and Ormes* as a part of a plan for extensive works combining fiction and history while imitating the air of history,—the whole to be completed by "an Utopian system of manners and government."[1]

The promoters and mouthpieces of these ideal schemes are men, like Falkland, of unusual powers and great possibilities of good, but, like Falkland, turned by the force of circumstances in part to evil. Ludloe, Carwin's patron, is only sketched in the fragment in which he appears, but he was obviously intended to have something of the sinister charm which distinguished Ormond, Brown's most finished villain, whose pursuit of the beautiful and virtuous Constantia Dudley leads him to cause the murder of her father, and finally to threaten the life of Constantia herself, who stabs him in self-defence. Ormond is the more detailed portrait of the heroic criminal sketched in Ludloe. He is said to be "of all mankind the most difficult and the most deserving to be studied." It is due to the "unexampled formation of this man's mind" that, as in the case of Falkland, his good qualities become the source of his errors—"considerations of justice and pity were made, by a fatal perverseness of reasoning, champions and bulwarks of his most atrocious mistakes." Thoroughly devoted to political schemes "likely to possess an extensive influence on the future conditions of the western world," the center of intrigues and director of all sorts of agents and fellow-workers, he still finds time to gratify his curiosity by impersonating a chimney-sweep, and thus introducing himself into his neighbor's houses. Confident in his own position, and the force of his own personality, he disregards the ordinary conventions of society and, we are told, never condescends to apply the title of Mr. or Miss to anyone. In spite of his avowed contempt for religion and for marriage, his fascination of personality and intellect is fatal to the beautiful Helena, who

[1] Dunlap, Vol. I, p. 258. Such a system was actually described by Henry Sherburne in his *Oriental Philanthropist* (Portsmouth, 1800), in which Oriental fairy tale machinery is used to bring about the establishment of an ideal state.

possesses only "attainments suited to the imbecility of her sex," and it almost proves the undoing of the grave and learned Constantia. Although in the conception of his character, in its mingling of benevolence and crime with some strange superhuman force commanding reverence, he resembles Falkland, he is as unconventional as Falkland is elegant. The contrast between their daily manners and speech is as great as that between the crude pleasure derived by the youthful Ormond from decorating his horse's mane with the heads of five Turks suspended by their gory locks, and the polished elegance with which Falkland's Italian duel is conducted.

A deeper difference between Falkland, on the one hand, and Ludloe and Ormond on the other, lies in the circumstances that have turned them to villainy. Falkland becomes a criminal in a moment of passion, and thereafter the principles which have guided his life honorably are made to lead him to infamy. But Ormond, whose crimes are set before the reader, and Ludloe, whose villainy can only be inferred from hints in the incomplete *Carwin* and in *Wieland,* have been led into evil ways while seeking a good end. One must go beyond Godwin for a model for these "systematic villains." Extricated from the fogs of indefiniteness in which Brown has purposely wrapped them, they resemble the leaders of the secret society of the *Illuminati,* or at least they resemble the popular idea of those leaders.

The order of the *Illuminati* was established in Bavaria, in 1775, by Weishaupt, a professor of Canon Law at Ingolstadt, and in 1780 was suppressed by the Elector. It is said, however, to have secretly continued its organization, to have had representatives all over Europe and to have had an active part in the French Revolution. At the time at which Brown wrote, the *Illuminati,* their wide aims, their evil methods, and their mysterious power, were a widespread cause of discussion. A good contemporary account of the order can be found in a book by John Robison, Secretary to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, with the ponderous title *Proofs of a Conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of Europe, carried on in the secret meetings of Free Masons, Illu-*

minati, and Reading Societies.[1] The elders of the society were supposed to undertake the training of the novices or Minervals, just as Ludloe trained Carwin. The novices had no acquaintance with other members of the society,—each dealt with his own guardian *illuminatus,* under whose guidance he gradually imbibed new principles and forsook those in which he had been brought up; he learned, for example, that, as the object of the society was the happiness of all mankind, any narrow consideration of national patriotism must give way to this wider bond. Those higher in authority in the society were accused of absolute unscrupulousness of method and great immorality of life. A shorter account of the society was prefixed by P. Will, the translator, to a novel by the Marquis of Grosse, translated as *Horrid Mysteries*[2] (1796). Will quotes as his authority the *Uber den Umgang mit Menschen* of the Baron von Knigge, who at one time had been high in authority among the *Illuminati.*[3] The story is of the most glaringly sensational order, but the views attributed to the *Illuminati* are much like those of Ormond and Ludloe,—"let us farther suppose that the society should watch the secret process of nature, trace the means Providence employs to educate the human race and pursue the discoveries which their united exertions should stir up; let us finally suppose that these men should faithfully act as vice-regents of Providence, and strive not to improve, but to accelerate, the actions of the Supreme Ruler of the world; would these men wander from their great mark on account of the lesser troubles of this life?"[4]

[1] The first edition of this work appeared in Edinburgh in 1797, the fourth in New York in 1798.

[2] Peacock's Scythrop Glowry, who wished to revive the work of the *Illuminati,* slept "with *Horrid Mysteries* under his pillow, and dreamed of venerable eleutherarchs, and ghastly confederates holding midnight conventions in subterranean caves." (T. L. Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey,* London, 1896, p. 143).

[3] Mr. Wilkens in his *Early Influence of German Literature in America* quotes from Dr. J. W. Francis a statement that Will lived in New York for a while before he published, in London, in 1799, his translation of von Knigge's *Practical Philosophy of Social Life.* If this is true Brown was probably personally acquainted with Will. See Wilkens, p. 26.

[4] *Horrid Mysteries,* p. 130.

More briefly, their aim is said to be the regeneration of the world by faith, dagger, and poison; but in the meantime the machinery organized for that great purpose is often employed to serve the evil ends of individuals. There was much in this mingling of idealism and infamy to appeal to the peculiar imagination of Brown, already stimulated by Godwin's high-minded criminal. In the handling of this material Brown showed a more artistic instinct than did the author of the *Horrid Mysteries* or Brown's own countrywoman, Mrs. Wood. Although in the relations of Carwin and Ludloe he followed closely the system attributed to the *Illuminati,* Brown identified his heroes with no known association, and never explained the source of their power, or the exact nature of their designs. To the mystery thus guarded, he added the idealizing element of the Utopian commonwealth, which seems to have been an addition of his own rather than a scheme popularly attributed to the *Illuminati.* Although the first impulse to the tale of crime and of the high-minded criminal seems to have come from *Caleb Williams,* the *Illuminati* determined the form which this mixture of the magnanimous and the despicable was to take, and made Brown's tales an exposition, in a wider sense than was *Caleb Williams,* of the text *Le crime a ses héros, l'erreur a ses martyrs.*[1]

Arthur Mervyn, published in the same year as Ormond, introduces a villain of a lesser type, but still with something which sets him apart from other men, something that wakens in the youthful Arthur "emotions of veneration and awe." Welbeck's good and ill qualities, like Ormond's, come from the same source; but in his case there are no Utopian schemes

[1] The *Illuminati* made a later appearance in fiction in George Sand's *Comtesse de Rudolstadt,* which gives an enthusiastically idealized account of such a society, and an elaborate description of their ceremonies. The tale is chiefly concerned, however, with a society of *Invisibles* forerunners of the historical *Illuminati,* not with the group of Weishaupt and Zwack, who appear only in a postscript. A secret society of "Brethren of the Common Weal," resembling the *Illuminati* of fiction in their combination of a noble aim with evil means, appeared in Peter Irving's *Giovanni Sbogarro* (1821), a tale said to be taken from the French with many alterations. The political secret society is lost sight of, however, in pursuing the popular German brigand-theme.

for the betterment of mankind, no generous impatience of human suffering. His actions, good and ill, all proceed from the love of money and reputation; hence his crimes are sordid, and his death lingering and disgraceful.

Welbeck's worldliness is, perhaps, painted the blacker in order to enhance the simple virtues of Arthur Mervyn, the ploughboy philosopher, whom, to serve his own ends, he takes into his family. Arthur seems to have been intended for an example of the noble child of nature, instructed but not sophisticated by a few good books,—a specimen of natural excellence unspoiled by society, somewhat reminiscent of Caleb Williams.

As a story the book possesses little interest, and constitutes, indeed, practically two independent works,—for Brown apparently forgot how he was going to continue and pieced out his tale with a new set of personages. It contains, however, Brown's best known "horror," the famous description of the yellow fever plague in Philadelphia. It is the repetition of a well-worn commonplace to point out that here, for once, Brown has achieved the really horrible which he and all the race of Gothic novelists had so long and industriously sought. Yellow fever scenes are introduced in the first part of *Ormond,* and are described with a realistic detail as complete as that in *Arthur Mervyn,* but the scale of the picture is less.[1] In *Arthur Mervyn* Brown managed to give a sense of the horror of silent streets disturbed only by the rattling of the dead cart, of the terror of empty houses abandoned to the dead and the dying, of the atmosphere of disease and death hanging over the panic-stricken city in which neither food nor shelter could be bought. He describes the flight of the living, the atrocities of the hospital, and the hearse men dragging out the still breathing bodies, and illustrates the general desolation by the experiences of Arthur who, attacked by the fever, could only drag himself to a deserted house to die out of reach of the hospital cart. Brown's descriptions are of an unshrinking realism, he never trusts in suggestion or in the imagination of his reader,

[1] The Philadelphia epidemic appears later in *Laura,* "By a Lady of Philadelphia." (New York, 1809.)

and yet from his loathsome catalogue of disgusting details there results an effect of simple horror.

Arthur Mervyn is the last of Brown's tales of villainy. *Edgar Huntly, or the Sleep Walker* can boast of nothing more iniquitous than a murderous madman and, for the greater confusion of the reader, two sleep-walkers. The book, like *Arthur Mervyn,* breaks in two in the middle. The early part deals with the insane Clithero, while Edgar's wilderness experiences form the second, and by far the more interesting part of the work.[1]

In 1801, two years after the publication of *Edgar Huntly,* appeared Brown's last two novels, *Clara Howard, or the Enthusiasm of Love* and *Jane Talbot.* In contrast to all his other tales these are entirely without bloodshed—not a single murder adorns the pages of either book. *Clara Howard* is entirely without a villain, and in *Jane Talbot* there is only a poor, meddling, little spinster villainess. Brown seems to be escaping from the influence of the tale of horror and indulging his natural bent toward the analytical. The form, also, differs from his early autobiographies. The story is told in letters exchanged by the hero and heroine. Although in the days when he wrote *Alcuin* Brown, with the severity of the youthful sage, had apparently scorned love stories, remarking that " the languishing and sighing lover is an object to which the errors of mankind have annexed a certain degree of importance," in these later tales he employs the conventional material of fiction; and love, which has now become in his estimation a " precious inebriation of the heart," provides the theme of the letters.

The reader of these letters is constantly reminded that they were written in the days of *The Rights of Woman.* In *Alcuin* Brown had advocated equality of education and of industrial opportunity for men and women, and in all his novels his contempt for " female metaphysics " and his enthusiasm for a more rational system of education are apparent. In Constantia Dudley, the heroine of *Ormond,* he had pre-figured the virtues of Clara Howard. Constantia's education had been

[1] For *Edgar Huntly* see Chapter III.

conducted in Latin and English; her father had taught her mathematics, anatomy, and astronomy, and interested her in social theories, "instead of familiarizing her with the amorous effusions of Petrarch and Racine, he made her thoroughly conversant with Tacitus and Milton." As a result of this paternal forethought Constantia walked always in the light of reason, early decided that "to marry in extreme youth would be a proof of pernicious and opprobrious temerity," rejected her early suitor Balfour because of the "poverty of his discourse and ideas," and, notwithstanding the fascination which Ormond exerted over her, never fully gave him her affection because "he had embraced a multitude of opinions which appeared to her to be erroneous. Till these were satisfied and their conclusions were made to correspond, wedlock was improper." Meanwhile Constantia went on her way serene, self-poised, self-supporting, adored by a fond parent who "never reflected on his relationship to her without rapture." Her qualities were enhanced by contrast with the women surrounding her; —the weak and yielding Helena whose early training was of the antiquated softening variety, the impulsive and sentimental Sophia, and the energetic but unbalanced Martinette de Beauvais. The latter accompanied her husband to war, "more than once rescued him from death by the seasonable destruction of his adversary," and among other Amazonian achievements, "with a fusil of two barrels," killed thirteen officers at Jemappes. Constantia, without the gentleness of Helena or the vivacity of Martinette, had a clearness of thought and a poise of character unusual in the heroines of fiction. It was probably her resolute independence, her ability to think for herself, and the unconventional nature of her conclusions, that won for her Shelley's admiration.

Clara Howard is Constantia Dudley without the hardening effects of poverty and care, and with the addition of an enthusiastic affection for a charming and guileless youth, one of Brown's gifted rustics,— a clock maker from a New Jersey village to whom Clara's step-father plays the part of patron so indispensable in Brown's plots. In this case, however, the patron has none of the mingled nature of Ludloe or of Welbeck

—he is all bland benevolence, and far too much of a philosopher to object to bestowing his daughter on a youth whose natural merits are unadorned by position, property, or anything more than a self-administered education. But Clara discovers that Stanley is already betrothed to Mary Wilmot, whom he has never loved. Mary vanishes, and Clara nobly sends the reluctant Philip in pursuit.

The letters which compose the tale are written during his absence, and are chiefly occupied by minute analysis of the writer's feelings. Clara, who is the stronger spirit, goads Philip on in his not very energetic search, and devotes many pages to the dissection of his motives and of hers. Very characteristic is the firmness with which she repulses his occasional rebellion against the programme of self-renunciation which she has laid out for him. "I am in hopes that time and reflection will instill into you better principles. Till then I shall not be displeased if your letter be confined to a mere narrative of your journey. Adieu, Clara Howard." Philip promptly retaliates by contracting an apparently mortal illness. On his recovery the correspondence proceeds, with the same alternations of enthusiastic affection and quibbling reproaches, until Mary suddenly reappears, betrothed to another. Every obstacle to happiness is thus removed, and Philip flies to the fond Clara who assures him that, with "the improvements of time," and her own judicious training, he will soon equal her in "moral discernment," and surpass her in everything else.

Their story, that of the betrothal of the poor, untrained, and unconventional, but gifted and charming country boy, to the older and more sophisticated woman of wealth and social experience, recalls the strange love affairs of Arthur Mervyn. Although Arthur has won the young affections of Eliza Hadwin, a damsel of fifteen, that "age of delicate fervour, of inartificial love," and although his heart melts with rapture when he sees her, yet he has the fortitude to weigh the matter through many pages, and finally to announce that "In consequence of these reflections I decided to suppress the tenderness which the company of Miss Hadwin produced." To her he prefers the widowed Achsa Fielding, of whom he says that

" her superior age, sedateness, and prudence gave my deportment a filial freedom and affection, and I was fond of calling her ' Mamma.' " He is, as he candidly remarks, " wax in her hands," and he evidently looks forward to a life of felicity, relying on Mrs. Fielding's judgment for guidance and on her property for support. In the case of Clara Howard and Philip Stanley the difference of age and of temperament is not as great, but there is the same picture of the resolute and reasonable woman directing the gentle and irresolute boy.

The philosophical indifference to the sordid process of money-getting displayed by Arthur Mervyn, and to some extent by Philip Stanley, is even more pronounced in Henry Colden, the hero of *Jane Talbot.* " I cannot labor for bread," he frankly informs the enamoured Jane. " I cannot work to live. In that respect I have no parallel. The world does not contain my likeness. Hence it is, that if by marriage you should become wholly dependent on me it could never take place." This is the whole question in the novel; for Jane is dependent on her adopted mother, Mrs. Fielder, who disapproves of Colden because he is supposed to be a disciple of the iniquitous Godwin. Of course Mrs. Fielder believes the charge brought against him by Miss Jenny, a gossiping spinster, whose animosity is explained by the fact that she had once been in love with Jane's former husband. Both Colden and Mrs. Fielder besiege Jane with arguments and, as Jane's heart is apparently too warm to permit her judgment to be steadfast, she agrees, usually, with the one who has last written. Finally Colden is persuaded to withdraw, and starts on a voyage to China. He disappears on the way, but after the death of Mrs. Fielder returns, in time to prevent the broken-hearted Jane from marrying another man.

In this story, as in that of Clara Howard, nothing happens. The entire book is occupied with the weighing of reasons, the chopping up of motives, the analysis of emotions. Jane acknowledges her fondness for talking herself over—" It has always been so. I have always found an unaccountable pleasure in dissecting, as it were, my heart, uncovering one by one its many folds, and laying it before you, as a country is

shown in a map." The portrait of Jane is evidently a careful attempt to describe an affectionate, impulsive, unconventional creature, easily bent by an appeal to her affection, yet springing back toward a reliance on her own judgment. Unfortunately, not content with having made his Jane of a self-analytical turn like his own, Brown fell into the fatal error of trying to give her a light and playful humor. Brown himself was not a playful person, and his ideas of playfulness seem to have differed from those of the modern reader.

Jane Talbot, however, shares with Brown's other heroines the interest given by her apparent modernness in contrast with contemporary heroines, who were still blushing, and sighing, and swooning, by the rules which tales of sentiment had long and faithfully followed. Brown's women are not interesting as individuals—he never made them really live—but their unlifelikeness and the mechanical jerkings of their movements cannot conceal the author's intention to make them women of a newer type, to let them speak, and act, and love, for themselves, relying on their own judgment, and not on the conventions of society, or on the divinely inspired wisdom of a father or husband. There is an immeasurable distance between the helpless, drooping, persecuted Monima and the capable, self-reliant Constantia Dudley, yet the *Beggar Girl* was actually published four years later than *Ormond.*

It is customary to congratulate Brown on the possession of a sense of the horrible more real than that of his contemporaries. This statement, however, can perhaps be made too sweeping. Brown's mysteriously villainous heroes have an unquestionable effect of power, but his greatest success in the line of terror was in his yellow fever scenes; his murders are more gory than convincing, and the spontaneous combustion of the elder Wieland fails to thrill the modern reader. Yet to Brown and his contemporaries the center of what Miss Seward would have called "horrific greatness" in *Arthur Mervyn,* the scenes in which Brown aimed, as he said, "to wind up the reader's passions to the highest pitch,"[1] were the

[1] Dunlap, Vol. II, p. 9.

scenes between Mervyn and Welbeck. The yellow fever descriptions were introduced, as Brown says, to call forth benevolence to the aid of disease and poverty, and do not seem to have thrilled his contemporaries as much as did the unexplained mystery of what Mervyn really saw in Welbeck's cock-loft. Brown was a realist by nature and a terrorist by fashion. When the impulse given by *Caleb Williams* had spent itself he betook himself, in *Clara Howard* and *Jane Talbot,* to a series of analytical uneventful letters.

One effect of Brown's instinctive realism is to give his narratives an interest to-day which they can hardly have had at the time of their publication, for they give some idea of the life of America, and especially of Philadelphia, at that period. The injured maidens, the hapless orphans, and fair fugitives, of most of our early fiction might have lived in Timbuctoo as appropriately as in New York, but Brown's men and women, even if not very real themselves, are always put into a real and visible setting. One is struck by the activity and importance of Philadelphia, and particularly by the cosmopolitan character of the city, which appears in the varied nationalities of Brown's personages, the German Wieland, the English Howard, the Greek Martinette, the Italian Clemenza Lodi, the Irish Clithero, the Scottish Balfour; and the impression is deepened when one is reminded that "at that time (about 1793) there were at least ten thousand French in this city, fugitives from Marat and from St. Domingo."

Brown's most obvious debts to Godwin, apart from the political views which he adopted, and the autobiographic form of his tales, are the relation of patron and dependent, the character of the gifted self-taught country lad, and above all the hero of more than mortal force and fascination, the individuality strangely compounded of good and evil, but with a god-like ability to inspire reverence even in those cognizant of its crimes. The cult of individuality was, of course, in the air at the time, but it is clearly from Godwin that Brown derived its application to fiction. Brown has added the effect of breadth and mystery given by the secret political activities and vague schemes for the benefit of mankind in which his villains

are engaged, with their hints of a regenerated human race, and of vague lands of beauty and promise beyond the pale of the civilized and the known. Godwin's noble man, criminal through circumstances, has become criminal, also, by a deliberate theory of good. If Brown has idealized the aims generally attributed to the *Illuminati,* while adopting the mystery of their far-reaching power, he has not hesitated to adopt their indifference to the employment of evil means if the end attained be good,—less intent on pointing a moral than was Godwin, he had a more vivid sense of the occasional picturesqueness of iniquity.

In the matter of style, also, Brown was early influenced by Godwin—not greatly to his advantage. There is a sad reminder of Godwin's pompously prosaic manner in the description of Wieland's conduct on seeing the flames, and hearing the shrieks which accompanied his father's mysterious death—" the incident was inexplicable, but he could not fail to perceive the propriety of hastening to the spot."

In his later years Brown's enthusiasm for Godwin seems to have cooled, perhaps like his Henry Colden he was inclined to regard it as an incident of his " dogmatic youth," but his debt to *Caleb Williams* remains. That Godwin was not unaware of the merits of his disciple appears from his own statement that he found in Brown's first novel the inspiration for one of his last.[1] " The impression which first led me to look with an eye of favor upon the subject here treated," he says in the preface to *Mandeville,* " was derived from a story-book called *Wieland,* written by a person certainly of distinguished genius, who, I believe, was born and died in the province of Pennsylvania, in the United States of North America, and who called himself C. B. Brown."

Strong and original as was Brown's work it did not establish a school in American fiction. The only one of his contemporaries who showed any disposition to follow in his

[1] Margaret Fuller said that Brown and Godwin were congenial natures and that " whichever had come first might have lent an impulse to the other." Both were "Born Hegelians." *Papers on Literature and Art.* London, 1846, p. 146.

footsteps was George Watterston, whose first story, *The Lawyer, or Man as he ought not to be* (1808), a dreary tale of a very small and mean-spirited villain, obviously owes its title to Bage. *Glencarn, or the Disappointments of Youth* (1810), a story on a much more elaborate plan, shows some traces of Brown's influence, particularly in the use of ventriloquism, but in general subject the tale is not unlike many contemporary romances, with a little additional salting of mystery and philosophy. It has as much in common with Bage as with Brown, and has little new machinery except the hero's experiences in a den of robbers.

Whatever fascination the schemes of the *Illuminati* may have had for Charles Brockden Brown, in the well regulated mind of the Maine authoress Mrs. Sally Sayward Barrell Keating Wood they inspired only abhorrence, and she boldly took up the pen in the cause of piety and morality. Her first novel, *Julia and the Illuminated Baron* (1800), proclaims on its title page:

> "This volume to the reader's eye displays
> Th' infernal conduct of abandoned man;
> When French Philosophy infects his ways,
> And pours contempt on Heav'n's eternal plan;
> Reversing order, truth, and ev'ry good,
> And whelming worlds with ruin's awful flood."

In her preface Mrs. Wood disavows any intention to write a political novel, saying that she detests "female politicians." And it is not as political schemers that the *Illuminati* appear in her tale, but as promoters of atheism, corrupters of youthful character, and general agents of villainy.[1] Mrs. Wood had a fondness for placing the scene of her tales in Europe, a custom very unusual in our early fiction. The action of *Julia* passes chiefly in France and Spain,—there are two heirs

[1] In England, Sophia King's *Waldorf, or the Dangers of Philosophy* (1798) had already described, according to the *Monthly Review* (Vol. XXVI, p. 221), "a young man of talents and sensibility, deluded by a modern sceptic into a total renunciation of all restraint from religion and morality, and into a full indulgence of his favorite passions."

Tabitha Tenney, also, exclaimed: "May heaven prevent the further progress of Jacobinism, atheism, and illuminatism,—they all seem to be links of the same chain." *Female Quixotism*, p. 70.

of noble houses lost in infancy, a variety of villains, murders, abductions, and countless hair breadth escapes. Two very black miscreants, a baron who is the leading villain, and a count almost as infamous, are members of the *Illuminati;* the latter at the age of fifteen had been put into the charge of an *Illuminatus,* "one of the worst of men," who so trained his pupil that before the boy was twenty years old he had committed crimes at which even his tutor shuddered.

Mrs. Wood's next novel, *Dorval, or the Speculator,* has become practically inaccessible. Its title suggests that it may have been another anti-philosophic warning. The three books which followed, *Ferdinand and Elmira, a Russian Story* (1804), *Amelia, or the Influence of Virtue* (1802), and *Tales of the Night* (1827), are of no particular interest, either to the student or to the modern reader.

Brown's scorn of "puerile superstitions and exploded manners, Gothic castles and Chimeras" was not shared by all his countrymen. In the year after his death appeared a romance in the true Radcliffian spirit, entitled *The Asylum, or Alonzo and Melissa* by I. Mitchell, of Poughkeepsie, a man of much journalistic experience. In the same year appeared a condensed and revised version, in which the work is attributed to Daniel Jackson, Jr., then a young school teacher in Plattsburgh, where this edition was printed. The question of the true authorship of this interesting narrative has recently been clouded in controversy,[1] both Mitchell and Jackson having found partisans. The fact, however, that Mitchell's version was copyrighted December 2, 1810, and that the Jackson version did not appear until 1811, seems fairly conclusive evidence that the Jackson version, which was not copyrighted, was the later. The best known early edition is that of Brattleboro, 1824, which like all editions, except that of Poughkeepsie 1811,

[1] For details of this controversy, which seems to have been started in connection with a symposium on ghost stories, see *The New York Times Saturday Review of Books,* June 4, 1904, June 11, 1904, Sept. 3, 1904, Sept. 17, 1904, Jan. 21, 1905, Jan. 28, 1905, March 4, 1905. *The New York Evening Post,* Dec. 10, 1904 (with an account of Mitchell's life), Dec. 31, 1904, Feb. 3, 1905. *The Nation,* Dec. 8, 1904. *Booknotes* (Providence, R. I.), Jan. 14, 1905, Feb. 11, 1905, March 25, 1905.

follows the shortened form, omitting the long episodical history of the Berger family and the "Preface comprising a Short Dissertation on Novel." In later editions this preface, which is interesting for its criticism of contemporary fiction, is reduced to a page and a half of good intentions, maintaining the original declaration of an aim to inculcate a firm reliance on Providence. The author adds that "the story contains no indecorous stimulants; nor is it filled with unmeaning and inexplicated incidents, sounding on the sense, but imperceptible to the understanding."

The opening scene[1] shows the young Alonzo, a Yale student, and the still younger Melissa, sister of his friend Edgar, sitting on a rock at New London, viewing the "drapery of nature," while "the whipperwill's sprightly song echoed along the adjacent groves." Little is said upon this occasion, but the impression is deep; and when Melissa at a later meeting says "I shall never forget the sweet pensive scenery of my native rock,"—"'Nor I, neither,' said Alonzo with a deep drawn sigh."

In these early pages much space is given to the description of nature. Although the author is fond of the daylight hours, in which birds of gaudy plumage "symphoniously carolled the lay of nature," he is, perhaps, at his best in evening scenes. Alonzo's bliss as the accepted lover of Melissa is of short duration. His father suddenly loses his fortune; whereupon Melissa's heartless parent orders her to think no more of Alonzo, but to transfer her affections to his affluent rival, Beauman. When Melissa persists in her loyalty to Alonzo, she is immured in a species of Gothic castle, "situated about one hundred perches from the Sound," under the care of her spinster aunt, Miss Martha, a rough comedy character inherited from the eighteenth century novelists. Here Melissa is left alone during the night. Then Radcliffian disturbances begin. The first night she hears mysterious noises and whispers, and feels an icy hand laid on her arm. The next night the whispers become voices quarreling and menacing,

[1] This brief account of the contents of the tale follows the 1824 version which has become the accepted form of the story.

and finally rise to shrieks of "Murder!" A flash of light shows in her room a tall figure "wrapped in a tattered white robe spotted with blood. The hair of its head was matted with clotted gore. A deep wound appeared to have pierced its breast, while fresh blood flowed down its garment. Its pale face was gashed and gory; its eyes fixed, glazed, and glaring; its lips open; its teeth set; and in its hand was a bloody dagger." When Melissa attempts to flee, her way is barred by a black figure, in human shape, with red flames issuing from its mouth. A large ball of fire rolls through the hall and explodes. The next day Alonzo appears, driven to seek shelter from a storm as he passes in search of Melissa. He crosses the moat on a tree-trunk which the lightning has overthrown. Later he departs to seek aid, leaving Melissa in the castle. When he returns she has vanished. After further search, interrupted by illness, Alonzo sees in a newspaper the announcement of Melissa's death at the house of her uncle in South Carolina.

The disconsolate lover decides to devote his blighted existence to his country, the Revolutionary War being then in progress, and enters the marine corps. On his first voyage he is captured and is thrown into prison, whence he escapes by a rope made of his clothing. For a time he is sheltered by a sailor of the conventional, bluff, hearty, shiver-my-timbers variety, whose aggressively nautical vocabulary is the outer accompaniment of a noble nautical heart, and by his aid is smuggled over to France. There, through Franklin's aid, he finds employment. His life of mournful solitude is interrupted when he finds in the street a miniature. The next day he sees an advertisement requesting that the picture be returned to an American hotel near the Louvre. "Determined to explicate the mystery" he goes thither; he finds Edgar, and they mourn together.

Soon after, however, Alonzo is moved by the patriotic exhortations of Franklin to return to his country and his father. At the first opportunity he visits Charleston, and there seeks the stone sacred to the memory of Miss Melissa D., "whose ethereal part became a seraph, October 26, 1776." Alonzo is

overcome with grief, "he clasped the green turf which enclosed her grave, he watered it with his tears, he warmed it with his sighs." The next day a young officer tells him that his sister, who once saw in a dream the man destined to win her love, has recognized in Alonzo the man of the vision. He suggests that Alonzo might find the lady worthy of his regard, but Alonzo is firm in his loyalty to the departed Melissa. He is, however, prevailed upon to visit the lady, who appears arrayed in a sky blue silk gown, adorned with spangled lace and jewels; a green silk veil conceals her face. She draws the veil aside, and the transported Alonzo beholds the real, the original Melissa. In their joy "their tears fell in one intermingled shower, their sighs wafted in one blended breeze." It is subsequently explained that the dead Melissa was the cousin of Alonzo's beloved, and that the Connecticut Melissa had allowed her death to be reported in order to foil her tyrannical father. The ghostly apparitions were robbers, who made the old house their headquarters, and wished to discourage interruptions. "And now, reader of sensibility," the author concludes, "indulge the pleasing sensations of thy bosom—for Alonzo and Melissa are MARRIED."

What is most striking about this tale, apart from its astonishing longevity, is the abundance and elaborateness of its descriptions of scenery. In these descriptions the Thomsonian and the Radcliffian nature vocabularies are strangely combined; while a zealous patriotism strives to give local color by the constant mention of American plants and birds, frequently garnishing the page with explanatory footnotes full of botanical and entomological information.

The whole effect is one of the greatest naïveté, and the tale, viewed as the only American product of Mrs. Radcliffe's influence, seems an inadequate representative of her school.[1] Yet it has gone through many editions, and is probably known to-day to many who have never read *The Mysteries of*

[1] The reaction against the Gothic tale is represented however, by *The Hero or the Adventures of a Night*, suggested, perhaps, by *The Heroine*. *The Hero* is ingeniously made up by stringing together phrases and passages from the most popular Gothic novels.

Udolpho. When one considers the quantity of the Gothic output in England one wonders that the type should not have been more cultivated here. The reason, perhaps, is to be found in the somewhat aggressive patriotism of the period, which, from the first, caused American fiction to concern itself almost exclusively with American subjects, to which the mediaeval machinery of Mrs. Radcliffe was not appropriate. It was, of course, possible to erect a Gothic castle on the shores of Long Island Sound, but not even the ingenuity of a Jackson or a Mitchell could make it seem an appropriate addition to the landscape.

The question of the importance of the Gothic novel in early American fiction thus reduces itself to the importance of Charles Brockden Brown. Like all contemporary American novelists Brown sought, as was inevitable, his inspiration in British literature. It is probable that the popular German novels and dramas of horror were of some influence in strengthening the hold which the tale of heroic villainy and mysterious crime had obtained over his imagination. But *Caleb Williams* furnished the actual incentive to his criminal tales. He differed from his contemporaries, however, in that he modified the ideas thus borrowed, and added material of his own. To a certain extent he realized the general desire for novels reflecting native manners. His stories have as setting the real life of his time,—but it is only a setting. In *Edgar Huntly* he went further and devoted a large part of his book to wilderness life and Indian adventures, yet he still put forward a mysterious crime as the motive of his tale, and thus persistently identified himself with the short-lived school of terror.

Whether Brown might have done work of great and sustained excellence, if his life had fallen in a period when fiction offered more sober influences and better models, is a question which cannot be answered. As it is, he remains an interesting, but, as far as novel-writing is concerned, an isolated, figure in the American literature of his time. Although on the one hand he fulfilled in many respects the aims of contemporary American novelists, and although on the other he intro-

duced to America the fashion then prevailing in British fiction,—yet he had no imitators in his *genre,* and he exerted no immediate influence on American fiction. In the general history of American literature he has, however, always held an important place. The influence on many greater writers which has been ascribed to him is in itself a claim to cónsideration. And he has always found readers to whom his emotional intensity and his command of certain effects of terror have compensated for his lack of construction and characterization.[1] In the history of early American fiction his peculiar importance comes from the fact that he is the earliest American novelist who has won reputation and influence outside his own country.

[1] For varying estimates of Brown's work see *The Gentleman's Magazine,* April, 1811. *The North American Review,* 1819, Vol. IX, p. 63 and p. 26. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine,* Vol. VI, February, 1820. *The Retrospective Review,* 1824, Vol. IX, p. 305. S. Margaret Fuller, *Papers on Literature and Art,* London, 1846. William H. Prescott, *Biographical and Critical Miscellanies,* Philadelphia, 1882. Rufus Wilmot Griswold, *Prose Writers of America,* London, 1847. T. W. Higginson in *American Prose* (edited by G. R. Carpenter), 1898. *The Fortnightly Review,* London, 1878, New Ser., Vol. XXIV, p. 397. T. L. Peacock, *Gryll Grange,* London, 1896, p. 277.

CHAPTER III

Early Historical Novels and Indian Tales

Among the many types and varieties of fiction produced in England toward the end of the eighteenth century the historical novel is conspicuous. Like most of their contemporaries the historical tales of this period have little or no literary merit, yet they derive a certain interest from their suggestiveness as "signs of the times," from their contact with many of the new interests and ideas of their day.

The term "historical novel" seems to have been of wide and somewhat uncertain application.[1] Authors mix their fiction and their history in varying proportions, but there seems to have been a general feeling that a "historical novel" must introduce, in some way, either persons or events of historical importance and generally, although not necessarily, remote in time. Apart from this introduction of well known names, however, they follow no fixed plan. Some are closely allied to the stories of travel and adventure popular in that day; some are tales of seduction or of romantic affection garnished with noble names; many show a close kinship with the Gothic enormities of Mrs. Radcliffe; while the more serious minded deliberately undertake to reproduce the manners and customs of past ages for the edification of the modern reader. Thus they represent, always crudely, it is true, and sometimes ludicrously, many of the main interests of romantic and revolutionary thought, the love of adventure, the idealization of the past, the taste, half sentimental, half antiquarian, for architectural monuments and ancient customs, the power to perceive life and color in the pages of history.

To the early American novelists, who were laboring zealously to give their country a fiction of its own, the need for

[1] For a discussion of the historical novel as an established type, see Brander Matthews, *The Historical Novel and Other Essays.*

an independent historical fiction must have presented a difficult problem. America had no convenient feudal past in the description of which the jangling of armour, the gloom of ancient castles, and a liberal use of such phrases as "sir knight," could combine with the pleasing roll of Norman names and titles to atone for the absence of more definite historical information. Everything in her history was too defined, too painfully recent. No one ventured to suggest that the vicissitudes of the Pilgrim Fathers could be made the subject of light and profane literature. There remained only the Revolution and the Indians. Some aspiring authors probably agreed with Mitchell that the events of the Revolution were "too recent to be arrayed in the vesture of fiction." Others, however, employed them as the background of their romances, or more boldly attempted to weave them into the tale itself.

The appearance of the Indian in fiction is due to other currents of contemporary thought, rather than to the quickening of the historical sense. Close as is its relationship with the growing interest in out-of-door life, the development of the Indian as a romantic figure is still more a result of the tendency to idealize the virtues of primitive man, and to contrast the virtues of man in his natural state with the vices of a degenerate civilization. Voltaire's *Ingénu* is, of course, an extreme example of the latter tendency,—Voltaire was not at all interested in him as an example of Indian culture, but simply as a means to exhibit the errors of contemporary France. The taste of the later eighteenth century, however, led to a more romantic and less didactic treatment of this contrast, and the Indian began to be idealized for his own sake, and as a part of the picturesqueness of the forest and the wilderness.

The early attempts toward historical fiction in America, and the efforts to give the Indian a place in literature, obviously, therefore, cannot always be traced to the same source, but they often overlap each other and may conveniently be considered together, both for that reason and because, few and feeble as these early productions are, they make the first step toward the goal which American novelists had sought from the first—the discovery of a distinctive and national material for American fiction.

The oldest really American tale of the Revolution is *Amelia, or the Faithless Briton.* Although not published in book form until 1798, it had appeared in the *Massachusetts Magazine* in 1789, and in the *New York Magazine* in 1795. It is said, in its preface, to be "the first of a series of novels drawn from the same source, and intended for public communication; but as the author's object is merely to glean those circumstances in the progress of the Revolution which the historian has neither leisure nor disposition to communicate, and to produce, from the annals of private life, something to entertain and something to improve his readers, the occasion will yield little to hope from the applause of the public and nothing to dread from its candor." The tale, which is aptly described by its author as "a history of female affliction," has little attempt at history. The Revolution fades into the dimmest of backgrounds, and the story is devoted to one of the histories of seduction, too common in the fiction of the time.

Although written in the French language by a Frenchman, *Miss Mac Rae,* by Hilliard d'Auberteuil,[1] described on its title page as a "Roman Historique," may fairly be included in a discussion of the early American novel, for it is the first novel both written and published in America, having appeared at Philadelphia in 1784, and it is one of the earliest novels dealing with the Revolution.[2] It was printed in Philadelphia, put on sale in Paris, and was favorably reviewed in the *Revue de Paris* for July 11, 1784. The advertisement prefixed to the work declares that the tale offers a picture in which one sees "ce que la guerre a de plus brillant et de plus affreux, enfin des descriptions d'un sol riche et nouveau, qui attirera longtemps les regards des nations Européennes." The author claims that the story is true but the details his own; he has placed in

[1] Michel René Hilliard d'Auberteuil was born in Rennes in 1751, and died in St. Domingo in 1785. There were various mysterious rumors about his death, one being that he had been assassinated at the instigation of a rival economist. Among his works are *Essais Historiques et Politiques sur les Anglo-Americains,* Bruxelles, 1782. *Histoire de l'Administration de Lord North depuis 1770 jusqu'en 1782 et de l'Amerique Septentrionale,* London and Paris, 1784.

[2] For an early treatment of the Revolution in British fiction see *Emma Corbett, or the Miseries of Civil War,* Newburyport, n. d. (Dublin, 1780).

contrast "la férocité des sauvages et les vertus de leurs chefs, l'innocence Ameriquaine et les vices de l'Europe." The story is divided into three books, each headed by a summary of its contents.

The opening scene, on the island of "Manahattam," describes the horror and devastation of the English occupation, and recalls the ancient prosperity of the city. The reader is then introduced to Miss Jenny Mac Rae, alone in her father's house, "les cheveux épars et les mains élevées vers le ciel," offering a prayer for protection. This prayer is given in full; a footnote explains that Americans in general are "très pieux," and accustomed to use the language of the Bible, and to quote passages from it, in all their discourse, and that their wives and daughters are "pareillement nourries des sentences de l'écriture." "L'auteur," it is said, "a cru devoir mettre autant de vérité dans le style qu'il leur prête que dans la peinture de leurs moeurs." The prayer is interrupted by the stormy entrance of several British soldiers led by Captain Belton, who at once begins to pay compliments to Jenny. That pious young lady, being at the discerning age of sixteen, promptly falls in love with him. Belton suddenly swoons. Although the young officer is wounded, the author assures us that "son évanouissement provenait moins de tout le sang qu'il avait perdu que du coup que l'amour venait de frapper dans son âme." While Jenny is binding up his wounds her father arrives and bids her beware of the charms of the hostile officers, declaring that "ces vils agents de la tyrannie de l'Europe n'ont rien d'humain que la figure."

Mac Rae passes the night in reciting texts and Jenny in thinking of Belton. Morning reveals new horrors. The English move against Washington, and Jenny sees the army march past,—a sight so impressive that subsequently recalling it she remarks that "le bruit de leurs instruments ressemble an concert que les chérubins réservent pour le Dieu des combats, et le bel ordre de leurs bataillons est comparable a celui de l'armée cèleste lorsqu'elle passe la revue avant de dompter les esprits orgueilleux." Fire and massacre follow at night, but the Mac Raes escape to their country house near Albany.

Mac Rae, desperate at the news of British successes, raises a company and goes to the war. Because Jenny continues to sympathize with the English, her former friends avoid her as a suspected "Torry." Her father's letters describe Washington's successes at Trenton and Princeton, and order her to assemble the neighbors to hear the news. Jenny seizes the occasion to make a speech which converts many to the English cause. She keeps up communication with Belton through the aid of her maid Betty, an artful person, much given to describing the luxury of London life. Betty, who has lived among the savages, employs as messenger an Indian, ostensibly a fur seller, but in reality a spy for both armies. Belton, after amusing his friends with her letters, leaves the task of replying to his valet. Jenny persists in her devotion, in spite of evidence of the British officer's faithlessness. As a final warning she hears the mocking bird, which, in the author's opinion, unites "les talents du rossignol et du perroquet," distinctly pronounce the words "Malheureuse Emilia! Ah! Belton!" and finds, exhausted on the ground, a young woman dressed as an English soldier. This girl, the tamer of the mocking bird, proves to be a discarded love of Belton. Notwithstanding this incident, Jenny at once complies with his request to join him at the camp near Saratoga, and sets out with a maid and a man servant. The party falls in with Burgoyne's Mohawks, the author thus finding an opportunity to denounce the English method of employing Indians for massacre and pillage. The servants are killed and Jenny tied to a tree. Kiashuta, a renowned chief, arrives and defends her, at first with eloquence and afterward with a club, but the hapless maiden is slain by an axe. Touched by Kiashuta's tears, the savages prepare for her an ornate rustic tomb. Kiashuta hastens to the camp and seeks out Belton. "'Voilà,' lui dit il, en lui présentant la chevelure de Jenny, 'ce qui reste de ta maîtresse.'" As the white man declines to commit suicide, Kiashuta kills himself, that the beautiful Jenny may not be obliged to go unaccompanied "dans l'île heureuse." The story of Jenny's death causes General Gates to write to General Burgoyne, reproaching him for the use of savages in the war. The latter

replies that a rebellion is not a war and that, consequently, any means to quell it are justifiable.

A more cheerful and animated tale, not claiming the dignified title of historical novel, but placing the scene of its adventures in the Revolutionary War, is the *History of Constantius and Pulchera, or Constancy Rewarded* (1797), which illustrates the relationship sometimes existing between the novel of adventurous travel and the semi-historical novel. In its cheerful conglomeration of improbabilities it agreeably suggests a prophetic caricature of the modern tale of adventure. The story opens with a balcony scene in Philadelphia, in which Pulchera, soliloquizing, assures herself that before she could eradicate the charms of Constantius from her heart, "the adamant would vegetate." Constantius appears, and hears from his beloved that she is locked in by her inexorable parent, and is to sail for Europe the next day as the bride of a Frenchman. "Constantius," the author relates, "was on the rack at this fatal intelligence, in despair he drew his sword and was on the eve of falling on the point, thereby putting a period to an existence which he could no longer consider a blessing, but fortune, which always favors the virtuous, suggested to his mind a tow-line which he had that day observed in his shop." By the aid of this rope Pulchera escapes; but the lovers have not proceeded far in their flight when Constantius is seized by an English press-gang. Pulchera is forced to embark for France; her ship is captured by an English vessel, and she is overjoyed at finding Constantius among the crew,—"Nor were the sensations of Constantius less nervous at beholding his adored Pulchera." Their felicity, however, is short-lived; a storm arises; the ship is abandoned, and in the confusion Pulchera is left behind. When the ship breaks up, a floating hatch conveys her to an uninhabited island whence she is taken off by an American privateer, only to be again captured, after having put on a lieutenant's uniform and assumed the name of Valorus. While making for Quebec the ship is wrecked on the cliffs in a snow storm, and the crew scatters in small parties to explore the country. Snow having fallen "to the immoderate depth of four or five feet," they are unable to

find food. It becomes necessary to cast lots to decide who shall die in order to furnish sustenance for the rest. The lot, of course, falls on the disguised damsel; but the timely appearance of a bear preserves her for further adventures. After wintering in the ice-bound ship they are taken off by a Massachusetts privateer. Valorus is put, as prize-master, on board a brigantine which is captured by the privateer, but the next day her ship is seized by a British cruiser. She is thrown into a dungeon in Halifax, but, in company with other prisoners, manages to crawl out through a drain and to escape in a small boat to a vessel bound for London. From London she embarks for Lisbon, and thence for France. In Bordeaux she finds that Constantius, whose name was apparently bestowed by the author in a moment of unconscious irony, is about to marry the sister of her former suitor. She summons him to her inn, however, and there he finds his Pulchera, "decked in all the magnificence which the city of Bordeaux could afford." The remarks of Constantius on this occasion are worthy of quotation: "O transcendently propitious heaven! thrice bountiful, inexhaustible, magnificent Providence! inexpressible, benevolent, and superlatively beneficent fates! The most exalted language is more than infinitely too inexpressive to give an idea of the grateful sensations which occupy my breast." They return to Philadelphia and there live—"the greatest ornaments of the married state."

The martial exploits of Pulchera are surpassed, however, by the heroine of the *Female Review* (1793), described by her biographer as a "paradigm of female Enterprise." The author says that he has told the story of a real person, interspersing a series of moral reflections, and attempting some literary and historical information. He has, he assures the reader, "studiously endeavored to ameliorate every circumstance that might seem too much tinctured with the rougher masculine virtues . . . with a diction softened and comported to the taste of the virtuous female." The preface ends with a patriotic declaration that "Europe has exhibited its chivalry and wonders. It now remains for America to do the same."

The tale, after "a laconic history of Miss Sampson's extrac-

tion," describes the condition of the country at the outbreak of the Revolution, "the Earth seemed to precipitate her diurnal revolution and to leave the sun in frightful aspect. The shepherd's flocks stood aghast. Birds forgot to carol and hastened away with astonished muteness." Miss Sampson assumes man's attire and enlists. Among the soldiers she is known as "the blooming boy." The rest of the book is given up to the heroic deeds of this "gallantress" who survives every conceivable peril and hardship,—although her chronicler remarks of the battle of Yorktown that "this business came near proving too much for a female in her teens." As in *Miss Mac Rae,* much indignation is felt at the part played in the war by the Indians, who are usually referred to as "the infernals." After the war is over the heroine has further experience of Indian perfidy, for while on an expedition in the Ohio country she is obliged to kill her murderous Indian guide. The book is full of enthusiasm for Washington and of a somewhat lurid patriotism. At the end are copies of Miss Sampson's discharge from the army and other documents.

In addition to the occasional appearance of the Indian in these attempted historical novels, he is the central figure of a large group of stories. The magazines of the time show in anecdotes, short stories, and accounts of customs and manners, a general interest in the Indian and, to a less extent, in the negro.[1] Humanitarian zeal for the negro had little effect on fiction, but the widespread curiosity, and occasional sympathy, aroused by the Indian's more romantic possibilities inspired a considerable number of very curious tales.

In Mrs. Ann Eliza Bleecker's *History of Maria Kettle,* a short tale of the French and Indian War, the Indians appear as bloodthirsty wretches who, after years of friendly intercourse with the Kettle family and their friends, fall upon them treacherously and, in scenes of the most gory slaughter, kill all except Mrs. Kettle. She is carried off to Canada under the care of an old Indian who before the attack had promised her protection. The account of the journey shows real interest in

[1] For examples of this interest in the negro see the *American Moral and Sentimental Magazine,* New York, 1797.

Indian customs and is probably founded on the experiences of Mrs. Bleecker's husband during an Indian raid. The story, which appears in a posthumously published collection of Mrs. Bleecker's writings, is of the rather formless type, hesitating between the novel and the short story, then frequent in magazine fiction.

Mrs. Bleecker's interest in Indian customs was shared by the enterprising Philenia, whose achievement as the first American novelist has been discussed in a previous chapter. Inspired by a desire to be original in her subject, and having observed that "the manners and customs of the aborigines of North America are so limited and simple that they have scarcely engaged the attention either of the Philosopher or the Poet," Mrs. Morton brought out a tale in verse, *Ouabi, or the Virtues of Nature.* Any reader who may object to the attribution of so many perfections to a rude uncultivated savage she refers to M. Mercier, or the authority by whom she has been influenced, William Penn. She acknowledges her indebtedness in the matter of plot to "Mr. Carey's interesting and instructive *Museum,*" and breathes a modest hope that the attempting a subject so wholly American may entitle her to the partial eye of the patriot.

The tale, which is in the quatrain of Grey's *Elegy,* varied by long speeches in octosyllabic couplets, disclaims at the outset any connection with the softer aspects of nature:

> "Tis not the golden hill, nor flowery dale
> Which lends my simple muse her artless theme,
> But the black forest and uncultured vale,
> The savage warrior and the lonely stream."

Celario, a European wandering in exile, hears the screams of a young Indian woman who is in the clutches of an enemy—

> "Quick from his vest the deathful tune he drew,
> Its leaden vengeance thundered o'er the green."

The rescued maiden proved to be the betrothed of the great chief Ouabi. After feasts and dances the Indians go forth to battle, and Celario with them—"like white narcissus in a tulip bed." Ouabi is captured and kept a prisoner among his

enemies. Meanwhile Celario, wounded in the battle, is tended by the beautiful Indian girl, whom he soon learns to love. Nevertheless on his recovery he flies to avenge Ouabi and finds the chief alive, but bound to the stake, singing his death song with scornful fortitude—

> "No grief this warrior soul can bow
> No pangs contract this even brow;
> Not all your threats excite a fear,
> Not all your force can start a tear."

On returning to his people, Ouabi discovers the love that is between his betrothed and Celario. Magnanimously resolving to sacrifice his happiness to theirs, he blinds them to his self-devotion by pretending to desire another bride, and after giving them to each other falls dying at their feet.

What is most remarkable in this production is the resemblance of Ouabi, in his dignity, stoicism, and loftiness of spirit, to the idealized Indian with whom we are familiar in fiction. There is also a constant attempt to give real colour to the tale by details of Indian customs and folk-lore which are explained in foot-notes, authorities always being cited.

Indian abductors appear again in *The Emigrants,* by Gilbert Imlay, whose name is remembered only for its association with that of Mary Wolstonecraft. The aim of the tale is to call attention to the political questions then occupying Europe, and particularly to the effects of laws concerning marriage and divorce, and emphasis is laid on the imbecility of such institutions as are incompatible with reason and nature. It is thus to a certain extent allied with the work of so-called "Revolutionary" novelists, such as Mrs. Inchbald and Mrs. Charlotte Smith, who use the familiar figures and machinery of the romance of their day to display new opinions. To modern readers it is only of interest because much of its action occurs in the "back settlements," starting in Pittsburg, "that remote corner of the empire of reason and science," and proceeding to Louisville, and down the Mississippi, "these Arcadian regions where there is room for millions." The descriptions of pioneer life, however, are too much in the idyllic spirit—even the polite

Indians who carry off the heroine display an almost Grandisonian consideration.

Imlay shows more acquaintance with French authors, such as La Rochefoucauld, Rousseau, Fénélon, and the Cardinal du Retz than with English writers, but the former cannot justly be accused of having formed his style. In such phrases as "that luctiferous schism" describing the parting of friends, or the request to the lady whose father the hero has released from the debtor's prison to "make your generous and affectionate parent easy as to his penal engagements," the felicity seems to be all his own; but in his nature descriptions, for example that of the forest in which "all the golden fruits of autumn hung pending from their shrubs," there is an echo of Thomson.

Charles Brockden Brown is sometimes credited with having begun the idealization of the Indian in his *Edgar Huntly, or the Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker,* one of the most loosely constructed, yet in some respects one of the most interesting, of his works. The preface contains the usual declaration of the author's consciousness of differing conditions in America and Europe. "The sources of amusement to the fancy and instruction to the heart that are peculiar to ourselves, are equally numerous and inexhaustible. It is the purpose of this work to profit by some of these sources, to exhibit a series of adventures growing out of the conditions of our country, and connected with one of the most common and most wonderful diseases or affections of the human frame. One merit the writer may at least claim; that of calling forth the passions and engaging the sympathies of the reader by means hitherto unemployed by preceding authors. Puerile superstitions and exploded manners, Gothic castles and chimeras, are the materials usually employed for this end. The incidents of Indian hostility and the perils of the western wilderness are far more suitable; and for a native of America to overlook these would admit of no apology. These, therefore, are, in part, the ingredients of this tale, and these he has been ambitious of depicting in vivid and faithful colors."

The early part of the story does not strikingly differ from

Brown's other tales. There is the usual gifted rustic, Clithero, an Irishman, educated by the usual benefactor, in this case a woman. Circumstances lead Clithero, in an attack of insanity, to stab her. He escapes to America and becomes a farm servant by day and a sleep-walker by night. His strange actions rouse in Edgar Huntly a suspicion that he is the slayer of Waldegrave, Huntly's mysteriously murdered friend. Consequently Huntly tracks him through the picturesque perils of a wilderness tract in Pennsylvania, called Norwalk. Huntly, another gifted rustic, whose educating patron later proves to be the first love of Clithero's patroness, belong to the type—quite new in fiction—of the nature-loving youth half athlete, half philosopher. "I love," he says, "to immerse myself in the shades and dells, and hold converse in the rude retreats of Norwalk." He tracks the birds and squirrels, not to kill them, but to observe their habits, and if possible to tame them. On the other hand, his pride in his strength and agility is equal to that of the modern athletic hero—"I disdained to be outdone in perspicacity by the lynx, or in his sure-footed instinct by the roe, or in patience under hardship and contention with fatigue by the Mohawk. I have ever aspired to transcend the rest of the animals in all that is common to the rational and brute, as well as in all by which they are distinguished from each other."

The wilderness is full of torrents and precipices, savage beasts and strange vegetation, breathless paths and impassable chasms, and almost over-full of caverns and subterranean passages. On one of his expeditions in pursuit of Clithero, Edgar is forced to fell a tree, in order to bridge a chasm over a foaming torrent. At his next visit, after safely crossing the tree, he sees a panther approaching the extemporized bridge, and being without other avenue of escape he is obliged to sit still and watch for the beast's arrival. After two pages given to a harrowing description of the fierceness of the animal, the reader cannot help a mild sensation of disappointment when the panther merely bounds into his den, and obligingly stays there, while Edgar scrambles to safety over the rain-wet tree trunk, —whereupon the panther, emerging, dances in vexation on the

other side. Then he springs; but his claws slip from the rock on which Edgar is standing, and he falls into the pit below. In these pursuits of the agile Clithero, Edgar has hair-breadth escapes, groping his way along underground passages with the rocky wall on one side, on the other the unseen abyss. His real adventures, however, begin when he too becomes a sleep-walker and wakes to find himself at the bottom of an enormous pit, within a hill, with no knowledge of how he has come there, and no means of getting out. The description of his groping efforts to escape, of the horror of cold and darkness, the alternations of hope and exhaustion as he tries to climb the sides of the pit, the actual physical sensations of thirst and hunger, his dreadful meal from the still warm flesh of a panther whose eyes shining in the dark have formed the only mark for his tomahawk—all these concrete and actual horrors give Brown an opportunity to display something of that grim realism in scenes of terror which he had shown more convincingly in his yellow fever scenes.

At length Edgar, guided by the sound of water, gropes his way to a cave lighted by an opening to the outer air, and finds it occupied by a party of Indians on the war-path, with a farmer's daughter as captive. All the Indians are sleeping except one sentinel, who presently leaves the cave to patrol the narrow ledge outside. Edgar creeps past the sleeping Indians, hurls his trusty tomahawk, and the sentinel falls lifeless. Edgar returns to the cave, frees the girl, steals a musket, and escapes. The fugitives finally reach a hut in the wilderness, the deserted abode of an old Indian woman, Queen Mab. It is illustrative of Brown's instinct for realistic detail that he stops his narrative of adventure to explain that the bucket on the floor contains sand, water dripped from the roof, and drowned insects, although none of these harmless objects play any part in the tale. The Indians arrive and are slain by Edgar, who is wounded; the damsel, of course, faints, and a rescuing party which appears at this moment takes away the girl, leaving Edgar apparently dead. This fact in itself shows that the novel of adventure is in its infancy. In any modern work of the kind the fair captive would have been the heaven-

sent bride of the hero, but the heartless Brown does not give her another page. Huntly recovers and departs, incidentally disposing of another Indian. Although thirty miles from home, Edgar, driven by anxiety to learn the fate of his family in the Indian raid, tries to follow a short way across the hills by night. At length he finds himself on an impassable hillside, with the river flowing swiftly below. As he hesitates to swim it, he sees a line of figures advancing through the gloom with the regularity of Indians. This decides the question,—he leaps from the precipice and swims the river with a hail of bullets falling around his head, in a style now familiar but then quite new. On the other bank he makes his way back to his own neighborhood, finding traces of Indian massacre as he goes. After his arrival there the narrative returns to Clithero, who has been abandoned during the Indian episodes, and it ends with the suicide of that unhappy youth.

Many of the ramifications of the tale have necessarily been omitted from this brief account. Brown's novels, because of his careless construction, are always peculiarly difficult to summarize—he constantly works up to climaxes which do not come off and entices the reader down blind-alleys, leaving him to wander out by himself. But the main Indian episodes have been given in order that Brown's attitude toward the Indian may make itself as clear as possible. It seems scarcely accurate to say that he idealized them—they are always savages, " who long to feast on my heart's blood,"—Edgar says, " I never looked upon or called up the image of a savage without shuddering." The only approach to romantic sympathy with an Indian which the tale displays, is in the account of old Deb, or Queen Mab, who does not appear in person, although she is credited with having instigated the massacre. Queen Mab herself is no very heroic figure, a shrivelled old woman claiming descent from Indian kings. Her tribe has been driven from the neighborhood, but she continues to live in her hut, guarded by wolf-like dogs. Partly through the pity which she inspires, partly through the terror excited by the periodical visits of her Indian friends, she levies tribute of food and supplies from the surrounding farmers. Although there is no at-

tempt to represent her as a magnanimous or heroic figure, and although her interference in the course of events is due only to malice or petty revenge, yet in her clinging to the home from which her people have been driven out, in the loyalty of the exiles to her authority, and in the influence which through her power over her people she can exert on the fate of others, there is something suggestive of Meg Merrilies. The other Indians are not named or given distinct personalities—to Brown they are simply savages, with the strength and endurance, and also with the cruelty, of wild beasts.

Yet Brown saw their value as a literary asset. To one searching, as did all the early American novelists, not only for some new thing but for some typically American thing—searching with a keener mind and a wider knowledge of literature than any of his contemporaries in fiction—their picturesque possibilities must have been strikingly apparent. Although they presented themselves to his imagination as shapes of terror rather than of grandeur, they were not the less suited to the picture of wild nature which Brown had set himself to paint.

Readers are now so accustomed to the out-of-doors novel, to the youth who communes with nature, the indefatigable athlete, the hair-breadth escape, and the rest of it, that one is apt to forget how new those adornments of fiction were in Brown's day. It is excellent evidence of his imaginative power that, notwithstanding the frequent incongruity of his weighed and deliberate style with the vivacity of the tale to be related, he could present the cult of open air life and adventure, which was then creeping into fiction, in a form more vivid and interesting than that achieved by any of his British contemporaries.

Over against this undoubtedly real enthusiasm for that "spirit that breathes its inspiration in the gloom of forests and on the verge of streams," one is tempted to set John Davis's account of his introduction to Brown. This not too reliable traveller says that, finding the author of *Arthur Mervyn* working in a dismal room, he asked if Brown would not write with more facility were the prospect of the lake of Geneva

before him—" 'Sir,' said he, 'good pens, thick paper, and ink well diluted, would facilitate my composition more than the prospect of the broadest expanse of water, or mountains rising from the clouds.' "

The most energetic exploitation of the Indian in this period was carried on by this interviewer of Brown, an author who belongs only in part to America, John Davis, generally described as of Salisbury, England. Davis, however, considered himself a citizen of the world. All his novels are on American subjects, or place some of their scenes in America, and most of them were published here. Although he at one time gained a considerable popularity, it is difficult to obtain any information about his life, except from his own writings. Born in Salisbury, he became a wanderer early in life and went to sea, at first in a merchant vessel, and afterward in a man-of-war into which he had been pressed. He made the voyage to India, and sailed in most European waters. While at sea he devoted his leisure to educating himself, studied several languages, and read Le Sage in the maintop. He came to the United States in 1798, and remained three and a half years. During this time he travelled, usually on foot, over a large part of the country. When out of funds he took a position as tutor, or did work for booksellers, until he could resume his wanderings.

In this way he was led to write his first novel, *The Original Letters of Ferdinand and Elizabeth,* a seduction-suicide-*Sorrows of Werther* concoction, which, Davis says, was founded on facts brought to his attention by a bookseller. His next novel, *The Farmer of New Jersey,* had a sequel, *The Wanderings of William,* which is now apparently lost. *The Farmer* and his later tale, the *Post Captain, or the Wooden Walls Well Manned,* professedly a picture of life in the English navy, but really a broad farce in the most execrable taste, need no detailed discussion here,—and it is hardly necessary to offend the shade of Smollett by dwelling on his influence in them. It seems to have been impossible for Davis to try to be either sentimental or humorous without being either silly or offensive, or both together.

After several years of wandering and rather aimless literary

work, Davis returned to England and published his *Travels,* recounting his American experiences, and describing with much detail his acquaintance with all the leading men of America. His chief enthusiasm, however, is for natural scenery, for the forest regions in which he journeyed on foot noting every detail of vegetation and bird and animal life, for the taverns in the wilderness, the inhabitants of forest cabins, and above all for the Indians, of whom he says that they "want only an historian who would measure them by the standard of Roman ideas to equal in bravery and magnanimity those proud masters of the world." Again he declares that "in humanity and all the softer emotions the Indians of America will rival the most polished nations of the world."

While travelling in Virginia he had planned, and possibly composed, his most successful work, *The First Settlers of Virginia,* described on its title page as "An Historical Novel exhibiting a view of the Rise and Progress of the Colony of Jamestown, a picture of Indian Manners. . . ." The second edition appeared in New York, in 1805, and the third in 1806, and a condensed version was published in Philadelphia, in 1817, under the title of *Captain Smith and Princess Pocahontas, an Indian Tale.*

To the 1805 edition are prefixed comments both favorable and unfavorable, extracted from the leading English and American reviews, including one from the *Philadelphia Monthly Magazine,* by Charles Brockden Brown. Brown commends the subject "which is pure American and which relates to two of the most interesting personages in Early American History." There are also letters to the author from various distinguished persons, among them Thomas Jefferson. The writer adds that, as the editor of the *New York Evening Post* has, with the most diabolical malice, asserted that these letters are forged, the originals may be seen by any person whose scepticism may have been raised by the base calumniator who has endeavored to blast the author's character. In this Davis was following a practice common among English journalists a century before.

The tale itself escorts the first settlers from England to

Virginia, and describes their struggles to establish themselves. Then comes the woeful day when Smith, on an exploring expedition, is captured by the Indians, and tied to a stake, while his fate is being decided. Smith preserves sufficient detachment of spirit, notwithstanding the crisis in his affairs, to feel that the dignity and gestures of the Indian orator give him "a lively idea of the celebrated speakers of Greece and Rome." It is decided to take him to Powhatan. The first stopping place on the journey gives the author an opportunity to descibe in detail an Indian village, and the arrival at Powhatan's dwelling place occasions further descriptions of manners and customs. Smith's rescue by Pocahontas is described with much affecting detail and tribute to the charms of the Indian princess. The return from a distant hunt of Powhatan's son, Nantaquas, introduces the real noble redman. Beautiful, dignified, high-minded, generous, Nantaquas at once takes Smith to his heart, and when his father proposes to spare the captive's life but keep him a slave spurns the suggestion, exclaiming, "No, sire! Life without liberty is only a burden. He wants only a little ground, you can easily spare it." After a council and Indian dances, Smith, with an escort, sets out through the forest. The natural objects seen on the march, the forest trees, the moss, the birds, and the like are carefully described in little separate discourses, evidently taken from the notes of Davis's wanderings, and not thoroughly woven into the tale. After Smith's return to his friends, the story goes on in a loose chronicle fashion, telling of explorations, negotiations with the Indians, and the arrival of new ships. Whenever possible it gives minute descriptions of Indian customs and of forest animals.

After years of struggle, Smith decides to return to England. To delude the fond Pocahontas, whose affection has never melted his hard heart, he embarks secretly, and causes a report of his death to be circulated. The Indian maid is dissolved in woe, but solace is at hand, although she knows it not. In the words of the author, "though the breast of Mr. Rolfe possessed not the ambitions of Captain Smith, it was infinitely more accessible to the softer emotions." When one further

learns that "his countenance was soul, his speech exclamation," the fate of the princess is plain. The scene, however, in which Pocahontas, weeping over the supposed grave of Smith, dries her tears at Rolfe's first declaration of affection, and promptly returns his proffered regard is somewhat too abrupt in its emotional shifting. One is reminded of the spectacle of Mr. Collins changing from Jane to Elizabeth while Mrs. Bennett stirred the fire.

After his return to England, in 1802, Davis wrote a life of Chatterton, *The Post Captain,* and *Walter Kennedy, an American Tale.* In the last of these he returns to the forest and the Indians. The story describes the solitary wanderings of Kennedy, an Irish youth crossed in love, who, like René, seeks peace of mind in the wilds of America, finally making his home among the Indians and marrying an Indian princess.

Although Davis has no ability as a novelist, and the impression of his personality which one derives from his works is distinctly disagreeable, he seems to have been an observant and interested traveller, with a zeal for noting and reproducing new and unusual scenes, to which his tales probably owed such popularity as they attained.

Several years after the publication of Davis's Indian tales, appeared one of the most remarkable products of patriotic fervor and humanitarian zeal that ever celebrated the virtues of the guileless savage, *The History of the Female American, or the Extraordinary Adventures of Unca Eliza Winkfield, Compiled by Herself.* This unusual work unites certain characteristics of several types popular in the fiction of the day,—the religious novel, the Indian tale, the Robinson Crusoe romance, with a slight reminiscence of *Atala;* or, from a more modern point of view, it might perhaps be described as a happy combination of Mr. Rider Haggard and a missionary tract.

The tale, which is autobiographical in form, first explains the heroine's ancestry. Her father, whose family had been among the first settlers of Virginia, had been captured in an Indian massacre at Jamestown, and taken prisoner to the Indian king. His life had been saved by the princess Unca, who had

fallen in love with him. Winkfield, after he had "lost his first disgust for her complexion," returned her regard. Unfortunately the king's eldest daughter, Alluca, also loved the captive, and bade him choose between her love and poison in a pomegranate shell. He nobly swallowed the fatal draught, but was revived by Unca who arrived in time to save her Winka, as she fondly called him. The old king then permitted their marriage, contributed a large dowry, and yearly thereafter sent a messenger with inquiries and rich gifts.

This blissful state of affairs continues until the little Unca Eliza is six years old, when Alluca becomes queen and sends assassins who murder the princess Unca. Winkfield escapes, and later sends his daughter to be educated in England. There she learns Greek, Latin, and polite literature, and attracts much attention by her tawny skin, lank black hair, strings of diamonds, and retinue of slaves. She returns to America for a time, but after her father's death buys a sloop to convey herself, her slaves, and effects, to England. The captain of her ship tries to force from her a promise to marry his son, or else to give him thirty thousand pounds. Failing in this, he slaughters the slaves and maroons Unca Eliza on an uninhabited island.

After perusing the Greek Testament which she always carries in her pocket, the dauntless Unca takes over the establishment of a hermit lately deceased, who has left a commodious and neatly furnished cell, a flock of well trained goats, and an autobiography containing full directions for island housekeeping. From this manuscript she learns that she is living in part of the ruined temple of an idol sacred to the sun, which Indians from a neighboring island come once a year to worship. On investigation she finds many rooms each adorned by a golden lamp, and filled with mummies of priests, or the stone coffins of virgins consecrated to the temple service. All the priestesses wear golden coronets, and the high priests have golden suns on their breasts.

A slight diversion occurs when she finds that the hermit is not dead after all, but he dies the next day, and Unca continues

her explorations. She finds the idol itself, an enormous golden image, inscribed "the oracle of the sun," and near it she discovers a trap-door leading into a room full of precious vestments. A staircase leads up into the interior of the idol. Unca, ascending, finds herself in the head looking out over the temple hall, and perceives arrangements to swell to superhuman sounds the voice of any one speaking where she stands.

As the day for the Indians' annual worship approaches, Unca decides to speak to them from the idol and convert them to Christianity. Her words, spoken as those of an oracle, have great effect. After the crowd has departed the priests return to learn her wishes, and she tells them that a woman in form like themselves shall come among them with words of instruction and enlightenment. Then, dressed in a high priest's vestments and covered with jewels, she accompanies them to their island, where she instructs the people, translates the Bible, and employs the young priests to teach the church of England catechism to the children. At the end of three years a cousin from England comes in search of Unca, marries her, and, as he is a clergyman, is of great assistance to her in her missionary efforts. Their work continues to prosper and receives further assistance from a converted pirate.[1]

Quite as remarkable, perhaps, in its way, as the *Female American* is *The Champion of Freedom, or the Mysterious Chief* by Samuel Woodworth, the author of *The Old Oaken Bucket.* Of this work, which deals with the War of 1812, its author says: "Although termed a Romance . . . it will nevertheless prove to be the most correct and complete history of the recent War which has yet appeared." He also calls attention to the fact that the book is "of domestic manufacture and cannot displease the eye of a patriot."

The hero, the youthful George Washington Willoughby, has from his birth been reserved for no common fate. His father, Major Willoughby, had received from his friend and general,

[1] This is possibly the first novel to indicate the interest in the nations to the south of the United States which later appears in works by R. C. Sands and Timothy Flint.

George Washington, a sword, which he had sworn never to relinquish except with life, but in an Indian fight his hand had been struck off, and the sword had fallen from his grasp. The unhappy major exclaimed: "O that I had a son to redeem my vow!" Whereupon a voice, proceeding from the lifeless body of a Miami chief, said distinctly: "You have a son to redeem your vow." At that hour, eight hundred miles away, George Washington Willoughby was born.

To avoid the contaminating influences imported from Europe, Major Willoughby removes to the shore of Lake Erie, where he builds a "neat rural mansion," furnished "in a style of cottage elegance." The youthful George Washington Willoughby is the child of nature. His friendship with the neighboring Indians is so great that "at the age of sixteen George Washington Willoughby had become quite an accomplished savage." It is hardly necessary to enter into the details of his adventures. He of course joins the army at the outbreak of the war, and the rest of the book is devoted to the history of the struggle, told for the most part in letters exchanged by the personages of the tale, but without any real weaving together of fiction and history. The one striking feature of the narrative is the apparition of the mysterious chief, the majestic form of the dead Indian warrior who foretold the hero's birth, and in time of stress or crisis always appears to exhort, admonish, or reprove. This strange creation seems to have been intended by the author to represent the spirit of Washington, clothing itself in the form of the dead chief in order to watch over his namesake. There is an egregious solemnity about Woodworth's attitude toward his hero which shakes the seriousness of the reader, especially in the moments of greatness, when the hero alludes to himself in the third person as George Washington Willoughby, apparently rolling the sounding syllables on his tongue.

Although all these early attempts at historical romances and Indian tales are, with the exception of *Edgar Huntly,* always trivial and often absurd, they have a certain appeal to the interest of the modern reader, apart from the claims made by

the sincere, although somewhat over-aggressive, patriotism of their authors. The earliest American fiction had looked backward, finding its models in the schools of Richardson and his contemporaries, already passing as a literary fashion. The stories of Gothic terrors and of political speculation merely kept abreast of the fashions of the day. But these tales of history and of Indian adventure look forward, however feebly and short-sightedly, to another great period of fiction.

CHAPTER IV

Cooper and his Contemporaries

Although the years from 1815 to 1820 saw a revival of the novel in England through the immediate popularity of Scott's romances, in America, nevertheless, they were years of discouragement and inactivity. The patriotic efforts of the early American novelists had apparently spent themselves in vain. People still read novels, but they read English novels,[1] and they depended on English citicism to tell them what novels to read. John Neal in his *Randolph,* published in 1823, voices, with his customary exaggeration, the accusations of dependence and servility brought, not without justice, against the American critics of his day, saying that in America the name of novel-writer would be considered a reproach to a man of genius. He complains bitterly of the complete neglect of Charles Brockden Brown by his countrymen. "Few of our literary men have read him," he says. Any praise which Brown may receive in America is due, not to admiration of his work, but to the commendation which it has received in England. At the time at which he writes, however, he finds that things are improving, and men are beginning to put on their title-pages "by an American," and "an American tale," words that a few years before would have been as politic as "by a Choctaw," or a "Narragansett

[1] George Watterston early complained of this—"Baldwin observed that the novels of this country did not seem to be received with that favor he thought they were entitled to. 'That is,' he said, 'because their scenes are placed here, the public taste is in this respect corrupt and injudicious—novel readers have so long been in the habit of perusing works whose scenes lie in Europe and whose characters they are unacquainted with, that they instantly revolt at a novel description of American scenery and American character.'" *Glencarn,* p. 207. See also the *North American Review,* 1815, Vol. I, p. 307, article on American Literature, and Vol. II, p. 33, *Reflections on the literary delinquency of America.* See also H. C. Lodge on Colonialism in the United States, in *Studies in History,* Boston, 1884.

tale." It was not given to Neal to foresee that in a few more years the inscriptions which he suggested in derision would have helped to sell the book.

To this lack of independent criticism was added the interest of the publisher's pocket. The convenient simplicity of copyright arrangements at that time made it possible for him to reprint popular English novels and enjoy the entire profit undisturbed, while the needy race of American authors clamoured in vain for a hearing.

Whatever the cause, it is a striking fact that, great as was Scott's vogue among the reading public, his influence produced no novel in America between the publication of *Waverley* in 1814 and that of *The Spy* in 1821.[1] *Rosalvo Delmonmort,* which appeared in 1818, had. however, one curious connection with the Waverley novels. The tale itself is a melodrama of high life whose only memorable feature is the conduct of a countess. This lady is so overcome by grief at the death of her brother-in-law that she forsakes her ancestral castle and rents a house in London, where she lets lodgings to respectable young gentlemen. Although there is little indication of Scott's influence in the story itself, the name "Guy Mannering" appears on the title-page as that of the author of the work. A prefatory note explains that after the death of Dominie Sampson the manuscript was found in his pocket, with a note ascribing its composition to Colonel Mannering. In spite of this ingenious advertising device—the only sign of inventive ability displayed in the book—the tale can hardly have become popular even in 1818. Several years elapsed before any one realized how adaptable a pattern Scott had provided for that novel of "native manners" which had been the ideal of many aspiring American authors.

Scott had gathered up and recombined, according to formulas of his own, many elements present in the fiction of his day,—the tendency to localized or national tales with that

[1] Scott's novels, before Ivanhoe, were, of course, national rather than historical. But it was precisely a national fiction that American novelists had been trying to develop. For the spread of Scott's influence about 1820 see L. Maigron—*Le Roman Historique,* Paris, 1898.

interest in humble personages, on whom local characteristics are most deeply impressed, which appears most plainly in Miss Edgeworth's Irish stories; the interest in romantic landscape and word-painting of natural scenery which found its most striking expression in Mrs. Radcliffe's theatrical yet impressive scenes; the tale of adventure reinforced by the revived interest in travel and antiquarian taste for old buildings and trappings; and the eagernes for an imaginative interpretation of history which had expressed itself in many would-be historical tales, whose hopeless inaccuracies had a naïve honesty of good intention. These ingredients Scott mixed in proportions varying in his different works, and the result was a new form and a new force in fiction which was destined to bring about a revival of the novel.

In many respects Cooper was to the American novel what Scott was to the British. Indeed his service to the fiction of his own country was even greater than was Scott's to the British novel, for while Scott restored to favor a literary form which had once been great but had fallen into decay, Cooper and his followers actually established novel-writing in American literature, where, hitherto, even work so powerful as Brown's had given it no real foothold. In strict justice, therefore, any history of early American fiction should devote most of its space to Cooper. But as the object of this study has been to fill in the background against which Cooper stands, rather than to present a new view of the great emerging figure, the discussion of his work has been limited to what seems sufficient to make clear his position and influence among his contemporaries.

One feels an odd incongruity in the fact that Cooper,[1] who was destined to be afflicted with the epithet of "the American Scott," should have begun his literary career with a ponderous attempt at the novel of manners—and of English manners at that. This work, of which no impression but one of bulk ever

[1] For Cooper's other works and his life see Professor Lounsbury's Life in the American Men of Letters Series. An interesting appreciation of Cooper's novels by Mr. W. C. Brownell appeared in *Scribner's Magazine*, April, 1906.

remains in the memory, had at least the merit of encouraging the author to continue. A lucky accident led Cooper to interest himself in the story of a humble patriot of the Revolutionary War, and the result was *The Spy* (1821) a story of the Revolution. There are arid tracts in this tale, which is much in the general manner of Scott, with a great deal of action, a background of historical events, a love story among the more aristocratic personages, and comic relief afforded by the humbler retainers and subordinates—yet the interest of the story is sustained, some of the minor personages are well drawn, and the conception of Harvey Birch, the self-devoted spy, is entirely admirable.

The popularity of *The Spy* went far toward convincing Cooper that an American subject was no bar to the success of a novel, and in his next book, *The Pioneers* (1823) he continued the experiment. In this work he used as material the experiences of his early life in the frontier regions of New York while in *The Pilot,* published in the same year, he employed his naval training and his life at sea. The latter undertaking is said to have been suggested by a sense of the inexperience in nautical matters displayed in Scott's *Pirate.*

In these tales Cooper had discovered the three types to which he afterward adhered quite steadily—the romantic tale with a general historical setting, the sea tale, and the forest romance. His next novel, *Lionel Lincoln,* was, it is true, an attempt at the more elaborate and documented historical story; but it was a failure, slightly mitigated by a few good fights, and only saved from the stodginess of his first story, *Precaution,* by the absence of the atmosphere of piety and decorum which hangs like a pall over that work. In the first of these types he never repeated the success of *The Spy,* although *The Bravo* is good of its kind; but in the last two he found his real province.

Both *The Pioneers* and *The Pilot* show a sense of experiment. Their real interest to Cooper, as to the modern reader, must have been in the life of the forest and the sea; yet these were such unconventional themes in fiction that he used them as a background, and put forward conventional love stories, respectively of the injured and proud young lover, and of the

heartless parent, type. It is largely the presence of these rather wooden love-affairs that gives Cooper the reputation of stiffness that he seems to enjoy among modern novel-readers—yet one does not see how he could have done otherwise. He did not begin writing with any sense of a heaven-bestowed commission to reform American fiction, but felt his way like any ordinary mortal, following up his successes and, in general, forsaking his failures; so that his Leather Stocking Tales when read in the order of their hero's experiences seem to show a falling off in artistic achievement, whereas, if they are read in the actual order of their appearance one sees the advance made from *The Pioneers* to *The Pathfinder* and *The Deerslayer*. In building his earlier tales around a conventional romance of youthful lovers, Cooper had the excellent example of Scott to follow, as well as that of the countless minor novelists of the day.

From the use of this sentimental machinery arises that fruitful source of controversy, the question of Cooper's heroines. Professor Lounsbury has made merry over them. Mr. Brownell has achieved the more difficult, but not impossible, feat of admiring them, assuring the curious reader that the quiet scholastic atmosphere of New Haven is responsible for Professor Lounsbury's craving for "more ginger" in fiction. One gathers that Mr. Brownell himself finds a certain repose in contemplating the elegant vacuity of a Cecilia Howard or a Louisa Grant. One's own ideal is, of course, a matter of taste, but there is no real ground for supposing that these gentle beings were necessarily Cooper's ideal. They belong to one of the most elderly and respectable traditions of fiction—that of the fine lady or "elegant female"—and they could be inserted in any romance as simply as could a comma or an interrogation point. The romance of two young persons aristocratic, either by birth or by reason of wealth or position, has always, with few exceptions, turned the wheels of the tale of romantic adventure,—and in tales of this sort the heroine usually belongs to one of three simple types, the hoyden, the cat, or the imbecile. Cooper was far too polite to introduce the hoyden, too chivalrous to believe in the cat—there remained

only the imbecile, who had the further advantage of being much the easiest to manage. These ladies occur in all the romances of the time, generally in pairs, a languid blonde and a somewhat more vivacious brunette, or a proud and haughty brunette and a softer more susceptible blonde.

The exaggeration of the type gives those exquisitely aristocratic beings one of whom served as the heroine of Timothy Flint's Robinson Crusoe romance *Arthur Clenning*. Although her native pride and exclusiveness, which had at first made it difficult for her to speak courteously to the ship's steward with whom she had been shipwrecked, gradually melted, until she became his admiring bride,—yet to the last she spent her time in a specially constructed bower meditating questions of adornment. When an attentive providence sent her a giant black "savagess" as a serving maiden, mistress and maid devoted all their spare moments to remodelling frocks and contriving new costumes. Materials were not lacking, as the ship had, with the consideration usual in such tales, perched upon a convenient rock, until the removal of all its portable contents allowed it to sink with a quiet conscience. In comparison with such a lady of the first fashion Cooper's most elegant heroines seem rustic and impulsive. Moreover the elegance and helplessness of his ladies is always mitigated by simplicity and goodness.

As Cooper grew in skill and knowledge of his own powers, he modified or abandoned this conventional machinery as he chose. In most of his stories he still found it a convenience, but from the Leather-stocking Tales, in which it was least appropriate, it gradually vanished; it is still the motive power of *The Prairie,* but the lovers are already married and are kept in the background; in *The Last of the Mohicans* they are already betrothed, and the sentimental interest of the story is in the hopeless love of the half-caste Cora for the hero, and of the Indian Uncas for Cora. In *The Pathfinder* the conventional heroine has disappeared, and her place is taken by the pleasant commonplaceness of the soldier's daughter, Mabel Dunham, who, being under no compulsion to be elegant, has leisure to be sweet and sensible. In *The Deerslayer* Cooper achieved a

really subtle study of heredity and environment in Judith Hutter, and a strangely sympathetic realization of her feeble-minded sister.

There are other women in Cooper's romances, as in those of Scott, who being born to a humbler station in society, or a minor part in the tale, are natural and life-like because they were created by the author, and not acquired ready-made, as was the leading young lady. Of the enterprising damsels who masquerade as cabin boys in *The Red Rover* and as super-cargo in *The Water Witch,* varying their duties by performance on the lute, it is not necessary to speak in detail. One can hardly go beyond Mr. Brownell's epithet of "Ariel like" for these "paradigms of female enterprise," as an early ornament of American fiction would have described them.

Cooper's Indian, if less a source of controversy than Cooper's heroine, has been even more hardly judged. The assertion that Cooper "idealized" the Indian has acquired the grey-haired respectability of established tradition. Professor Cross says that Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook are constructed on a plan which, though romancers had often tried it, had never been very successful, "that of uniting in one person the characteristics of two races,"[1]—yet this is what Cooper strove hardest to avoid. Natty Bumppo himself, although he recognizes the common material of human nature, dwells pertinaciously on the difference of redskin gifts and white man's gifts—on the warpath Hawkeye never attains the Indian's skill in following a trail, and Chingachgook never learns to use a rifle with the accuracy of the white man. And the same ineradicable difference exists in their moral qualities. Cooper can hardly be said to have idealized his Indians any more than Charles Brockden Brown idealized them. Both saw their picturesque possibilities.[2] Brown emphasizes the picturesqueness

[1] *Development of the English Novel,* p. 153.

[2] For an unfavorable view of Cooper's Indians see Francis Parkman in the *North American Review,* Boston, 1852, Vol. LXXIV. He says that Cooper's Indian characters are for the most part either superficially or falsely drawn. In general, however, Parkman strongly commended Cooper's tales. For other views of Cooper see Lowell in Fable for Critics, Thackeray in Roundabout Papers, Mr. Roosevelt as quoted by Mr. Jacob Riis, and Professor Brander Matthews's introduction to the Leather-stocking Tales.

of their faults,—Cooper that of their virtues. But the virtues which he attributed to them are those with which they are generally credited by people who knew the Indian before he came into contact with the blessings of civilization as disseminated by the trader. Snelling, who wrote his *Tales of the Northwest* to correct the popular idea of Indian character and manners, did not adduce anything to disprove Cooper's general estimate of Indian character. The real idealization of the Indian was carried on by Cooper's contemporaries and imitators—some of them excellent Massachusetts ladies—whose Indians are white men painted red, and endowed with all the virtues and a figurative turn of speech. Cooper shows his sincerity when he allows Chingachgook, the only one of his Indian heroes whose career is followed at length, to fulfill the sordid tragedy of his race by degrading his old age with drink.

In the introduction of comic relief, and of eccentric character for variety's sake, Cooper also showed more tact in the later Leather-stocking Tales. Many of his eccentric and comic characters are interesting, but he sometimes forgot that the fine art of depicting a bore consists in enabling the reader to smile at the sufferings of the bore's victims. When the sensations of the victim are transferred to the reader there is something wrong with the author's method. There are far too many of these aids to cheerful reading in *The Pioneers.* In *The Deerslayer* they have entirely disappeared. Leatherstocking himself, a creation of eccentric character in the larger sense, is, of course, the most original creation of American fiction and the finest, because at once the most human and the most simply poetic, expression of that idealization of the unconventional which had made many appearances in fiction since Rousseau invented the primitive virtues.

The comparative neglect of Cooper's sea-stories is perhaps due to the absence of any one dominating personage to give the unity found in the Leather-stocking Tales. In his first sea-tale, *The Pilot,* Cooper discovered in Long Tom Coffin a worthy companion to Natty Bumppo; but Long Tom went down with his ship, and consequently became unavailable for the purposes of fiction, as Cooper undoubtedly lacked the in-

genuity in arranging resurrections which was displayed by his contemporary, John Neal. None of his other mariners ever equalled the salty picturesqueness of Long Tom. Most of them are excellent, but some are loud-voiced and tarry old bores.

In character drawing, apart from the Leatherstocking and Long Tom, Cooper, although sometimes successful, was inferior to Scott both in vividness and in variety. The interest of his stories, apart from these two personages, is in his extraordinary invention of adventure—perhaps seen at its best in *The Last of the Mohicans*—and in their natural setting of sea or forest.

Cooper's landscape[1] shows less of the influence of Mrs. Radcliffe than does that of Scott,—perhaps because his subjects were less like hers. His descriptive methods are simple, with little enumeration of minor detail and very few color words, yet he obtains wonderful effects of space, and mass, and atmosphere in his forest scenes, and in his sea scenes he gives the actual illusion of wind and weather. The sea is less a feature in the landscape, and more a living thing, to him than to Scott. His fresh water is fresh and his salt water is salt, and their "gifts" are as diverse and as conscientiously rendered as those of Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook. His descriptions have not the elaboration of pictorial effect common in modern descriptive writing, nor do they convey much information of the habits and conversation of bears and rabbits, but they are unsurpassed in poetic dignity, and in their impression of the silence and mystery of great forests or trackless wastes of sea.

It is not possible to discuss in detail here even those of Cooper's novels which were published before 1830—much less the whole thirty-two. After *Lionel Lincoln* came the most popular of the Leatherstocking Tales, *The Last of the Mohicans,* in 1826. *The Prairie,* in 1827, described the Leatherstocking's extreme old age and death. In 1828 appeared *The Red Rover,* one of Cooper's best sea stories, followed by the less successful Indian tale of early New England, *The Wept of Wish ton Wish.* Too much mystifying clap-trap cumbers *The Water Witch* (1830), interesting though the tale is when it deals with

[1] See Balzac on Cooper's landscape, quoted in Lounsbury.

ships and the sea, and the work is further weighted by the presence of a would-be comic Dutch merchant, whose chief contribution to the general gaiety is a Bob Acres-like adjustment of the expletive to the emergency.

Several of these novels were written during Cooper's wanderings in Europe. On his return he used the material obtained there for a number of tales in a setting of European landscape, *The Bravo* in Venice, *The Heidenmauer* on the Rhine, and *The Headsman* in Switzerland. Later in the more interesting *Wing and Wing,* he told a sea tale of the Mediterranean. His satirical novel, *The Monikins,* is best passed over in a decent silence. Cooper continued for many years to write sea-stories and forest romances; in *The Crater* he tried the Robinson Crusoe story; and in *The Ways of the Hour,* his last novel, published in 1850, he attempted a sensational tale with a purpose.

The Sea Lions, published in the preceding year, now derives some interest from the recent revival of Antarctic exploration, and calls to mind that unusual work, *Symzonia, or a Voyage of Discovery, by Captain Adam Seaborn,* which had been published in 1820 to ridicule Symmes's theory of concentric spheres. *Symzonia,* in its earlier portions—in its account of the specially constructed ship rivetted with copper instead of iron because of the magnetic mountain which Sinbad was known to have encountered, its account of the voyage southward, when the explorers visit islands and study the habits of penguins and unusual birds, in the discovery of Seaborn's Land and Cape Lonesome,—suggests a prophetic caricature of modern explorers' tales. The Symzonian portion of the narrative begins when the explorers reach a southern polar opening and find a Eutopian nation flourishing within it. Cooper's tale, later in time and more serious in purpose than *Symzonia,* has no scientific marvel to compete with the achievement just mentioned; indeed, the tale does not reach the extreme polar regions; but there is much that is interesting in its descriptions of Antarctic hardships.

In spite of their variety of subject, none of Cooper's later tales, except *The Deerslayer* and *The Pathfinder,* and perhaps

Wing and Wing, add anything to the reputation established by those published before 1830.[1]

Perhaps the surest, certainly the most arduous, road to a recognition of Cooper's real greatness, is an attentive perusal of the works of his contemporaries and imitators. The latter sprang up with astonishing promptness. Scott had probably filled them with a vague idea of doing something of the sort, and Cooper had shown them how to do it. As a result, before 1830, the Indian in fiction was in almost as general circulation as is his portrait on a cent to-day.

The first of Cooper's contemporaries to require mention, John Neal, did not, however, follow Cooper or anyone else. Neal said of the popular Irish novelist, Maturin, that he was "haunted by the spirit of Byron and the devil himself at the same time." By adding the spirit of Maturin to these two worthies, one obtains the ghostly trio which followed the steps of Neal.

His first story, *Keep Cool,* published in 1818, apparently starts out as an extravaganza, and ends as a tract against duelling, spiced with horrid examples. A portion of the action passes among Indians, into whose tribe the youthful hero has been adopted. Neal sympathized passionately with their wrongs in being driven from their lands, and a thirst for human gore was never any drawback in his estimation.

Neal's next novel, *Logan* (1822), was more intentionally an Indian tale. It is as wild and incoherent as *Keep Cool* and far more bloody. The chief actors are Harold, a young man "whose bold front had never endured a hat," as bloodthirsty as an Indian and so profane that a common soldier shakes at his blasphemy; and a colossal chief who is apparently slain early in the tale, but being subsequently brought to life takes to murder as a systematic occupation. The complications of the tale are countless and totally unreasonable. The reader is not surprised when Harold's health breaks under his sorrows, and in his delirium, on shipboard, the coiled cordage seems to

[1] On the other hand, few of them can be said positively to detract from it, and at least one of the anti-rent novels, *Satanstoe,* is of importance because of its pictures of New York in the colonial period.

him "a serpent of immense longitude, covered with eyes and hair." The tale ends in an epidemic of death and insanity.

Logan was followed in 1823 by *Seventy-Six* and *Randolph.* The latter is another tale of a mysterious hero, suspected of having a sinister past and an inky present, "so damnable a villain that his very breath is poison," "a magician in power and a devil in heart," who has a strange and irresistible fascination. All the young ladies in the story are in love with him, and his experiences divide the honors of the narrative with the trials of a lovely young lady, Miss Juliet R. Gracie. The hero's letters to an English friend gave Neal an opportunity to criticise contemporary literature, both English and American, including his own works. Southey, he said, had the power of making great poetry seem commonplace and commonplace poetry great; Coleridge was "an angel with his wings clipped." He tried to fit a phrase to nearly every author of reputation, and displayed considerable agility in hunting down Byron's borrowings. The tale proceeds through a labyrinth of conspiracy, until one of the persons of the drama is justified in remarking that "my hair will never lie close again while I live." At the end, by some conjuror's trick, the villain becomes a virtuous hero. *Errata, or the Works of Will Adams,* published in the same year, ends appropriately in a mad house.

Brother Jonathan, or the New Englanders, published in London in 1825, enjoys the distinction of being the longest work in early American fiction, if not in all American fiction, containing, as it does, over thirteen hundred good-sized, solidly printed pages. To realize the formidableness of such a work, one has only to recall that the first editions of Cooper's works contain between five and six hundred pages. *Brother Jonathan* was apparently intended to be an elaborate study of New England customs and dialect at the outbreak of the Revolution, but this intention was abandoned in favor of a man of mystery, an avenger of blood, an Indian chief, a prophet, and a general incoherency of mystery.

In *Rachel Dyer,* published three years later, Neal attempted a comparatively restrained and thoughtful study of the witchcraft panic among the Massachusetts settlers, which is not

without interest. This was followed in 1830 by *Authorship,* which started to be a travel tale, half-romantic, half-descriptive, but soon changed its mind and became a tangle of emotions and opinions. Neal continued to write novels after 1830, but it is hardly necessary to follow his achievements further.

His work often gives an impression of mystery, of emotional intensity, and of power, but it is power gone to waste. He vigorously exploited his own personality, and used his early novels to air his views. His usual procedure was to provide a preface full of mysterious hints exciting the reader's curiosity, to express his opinions political, literary, and miscellaneous, in the course of the narrative, and to add an editorial note, in which he demolished such of his enemies as might have been overlooked in the body of the tale. His views of women were pronounced, and not unlike those of Sir Willoughby Patterne. Apart from his general incoherency, his fatal defect was a total lack of any idea when to stop. One always has a vision of him gaily writing away until the ink bottle runs dry, and then scrawling in pencil a few deaths and an insanity or two in order to end the matter.

Neal's life[1] was more interesting and more significant than his novels. A person of varied experience and tireless energy, he is said to have been the first American to make regular contributions to the English quarterlies, he acted as a self-appointed advertising agent of America in England, lived for a while with Jeremy Bentham, and on his return to America did editorial work, advocated violently a great variety of reforms, and was the early friend of Poe, and of many other struggling authors.

The real first fruits of *The Spy* is probably James McHenry's *The Wilderness, or Braddock's Times,* published in 1823. McHenry was of Irish birth and was always filled with a desire to give his just dues to the Ulsterman, neglected in the Irish fiction of the time. Consequently the tale is concerned with an Irish family from Ulster, established far in the wilderness, and on friendly terms with a coquettish Indian queen, a sort

[1] Neal describes his adventures in an autobiography, *Wandering Recollections of a Somewhat Busy Life* (1869).

of copper-colored Elizabeth. The real interest of the story, however, is in the spectacle presented to the reader of George Washington in the throes of a first, and a hopeless, passion. In the wilderness, to which his military duties have led him, he meets the lovely Maria who, although brought up from infancy as a member of the humble Irish family, has managed to fulfill her destiny as a high born heroine, and consequently an elegant female. Unfortunately Maria's heart is already another's—Washington's blandishments are in vain, although he soars to heights of impassioned eloquence when in her presence, and when forced to depart leaves with her a handsomely bound copy of Shenstone's Poems, with passages marked in " that most simple and tender of all poetical effusions the Pastoral Ballad." When Maria is carried off and imprisoned by the villainous commander of Fort Duquesne, the enamoured George disguises himself as an Indian, and snatches his Maria to safety through a thousand dangers. But, convinced at length that her affections are unshakably devoted to her Charles, he bows to the inevitable, and decides that since joy is forever denied him he will devote his life to his country.

In the same year McHenry published *The Spectre of the Forest, or Annals of the Housatonic, a New England romance;* and in 1824 and 1826 he made a contribution to his self-imposed task of " delineating the character, objects, and proceedings of each of the principal insurrectionary confederacies that have for the last two hundred and fifty years affected Ireland." *O'Halloran, or the Insurgent Chief* and *The Hearts of Steel* made an energetic beginning of this arduous task, and aimed, incidentally, to correct the popular idea of the buffoonery of the Irish character caused by the Irish tales of the day. The comic Irishman had, indeed, become a weariness in fiction. *The Wilderness,* however, contains a particularly virulent example of the type in the hero's Irish servant, so that McHenry seems doubtfully consistent.

Of all these writers of adventure stories, the best equipped in actual experience was Timothy Flint, who had wandered as a missionary in what was then the far West, and had seen with his own eyes the scenes which formed the settings of his

stories.[1] His first novel, *Francis Berrian, or the Mexican Patriot* (1826), after a description of the Mississippi country, discovers a new scene for fiction in Mexico, where the hero of course falls in love with the beautiful daughter of a noble governor, becomes involved in a Revolution, and undergoes every conceivable affliction, supported by his love for the heroine and the sympathy of the inevitable comic Irishman.

In the story already mentioned, *The Life and Adventures of Arthur Clenning* (1828), Flint yielded to the seductive charm of the Robinson Crusoe tale, and therewith pointed a moral against aristocratic prejudices. The story adds nothing to the appliances of castaway house-keeping which *The Swiss Family Robinson* had apparently developed beyond the possibility of emulation. Many years later, however, Cooper's inventive genius made a notable addition to the resources of the shipwrecked by planting a kitchen garden in the crater of an extinct volcano and inducing a goat to adopt a sea-weed diet. But the less gifted Flint employed only the time-honored devices of this type of romance.

George Mason, or the Young Backwoodsman (1829) is a tale of pioneer life in the Mississippi Valley, intended for the edification of the young mind, and full of the year long privations and ultimate prosperity of the virtuous.

In *The Shoshonee Valley* Flint produced a curious romance of a white family living among Indians. The Indian chief has married a Spanish Creole, and the white man originally a sailor has carried off the charming daughter of a Chinese

[1] Timothy Flint was born in Massachusetts in 1780, and graduated from Harvard in 1800. After two years of theological study, and twelve as a Congregational minister in the east, he went west where he acted as missionary and travelled in Ohio, Illinois, and Arkansas, and to New Orleans and Florida. About 1824 he returned to the north. In 1826 he published his *Recollections of Ten Years in the Mississippi Valley*, and in 1827 a *Geography and History of the Mississippi Valley*. In 1833 he was for a short time editor of the *Knickerbocker Magazine*. In 1834 he moved to Cincinnati and for three years edited *Webster's Monthly Magazine*. In 1835 he contributed a series of articles on American literature to the London *Athenaeum*. He moved to Louisiana for a time, and was returning to New England when he was buried in a house blown down by a tornado. He died soon after, in 1840.

mandarin. The chief's son, the noble young Areskoui, and his rival Nelesho, chief of a clan which is allied with the Shoshonees, both desire to marry the lovely white maiden Jessie. The peace of the valley is broken by the arrival of white visitors, a virtuous young hero who wins Jessie's affections, and a scheming young villain. The latter, foiled in his designs upon her, joins a plot against the good chief which is formed by Nelesho and a wicked French trader. After various plottings, and foilings, and massacrings, Jessie is carried off to the island of Ostroklotz, devoted to the evil amusements of the Russian fur traders. After her rescue and return to the valley Areskoui, seeing that his hopeless devotion is standing between Jessie and happiness, magnanimously throws himself into the lake. But his sacrifice is in vain. Repeated trials have shaken Jessie's reason, and on a voyage to China she disappears into the ocean. The tale is full of Indian customs and festivities, salmon spearing, buffalo hunting, and fights with Blackfeet.

Flint had no gift for narrative or for characterization. Consequently his novels are not diverting as stories, but his descriptions are sometimes interesting as a result of painstaking and detailed observation. They are entirely without the poetry of Cooper's landscapes, and are valuable chiefly for their conscientious enumeration of natural objects, animals, and birds,—interesting as natural history, but in pictorial effect not unlike an old-fashioned wall-paper of an ornithological pattern.

In the year following the publication of *Francis Berrian,* Mrs. Anne Royall put forth her novel *The Tennessean.* Possibly Flint's tale may have inspired her to place in Mexico the scenes of her hero's early adventures, and of his only love, also presided over by a comic Irishman. The author herself is said to have been stolen in childhood by the Indians and kept among them fifteen years—a fact which should have given her an opportunity to distance all competitors in Indian fiction. Unfortunately, however, the Indian is almost the only personage then fashionable in light literature who does not appear in the tale. The main ingredients are an impoverished hero; a

devoted friend; a Mexican prison; a Spanish governor's lovely daughter with a comic Irish servant; an escape to Havana; pirates; a cave full of monsters of iniquity; a long-lost nautical uncle with a noble heart, unlimited money, absolutely no grammar, and a black servant, Sambo; a persecuted maiden; three heartless females and two compassionate ones; a major villain who perishes, and two minor villains who repent. Wine flows as freely as did blood in *Logan,* thus giving a pleasing air of conviviality, which the frequent consumption of a repast, consisting of "a cold cheek," seems strangely to enhance. Reunions of long lost friends occur with startling frequency, and at the end the hero is even reunited with his father's ancient steed Pompey. The tale seems to be a hesitation between the new novel of adventure and the old novel of domestic trials and persecuted virtue.

Of the writers of combined historical and Indian fiction who toiled in the path of Cooper, not the worst, perhaps, is N. M. Hentz[1] the author of *Tadeuskund, the Last King of the Lenape,* published in 1825. His story is not a work of genius, or of striking talent; but it is painstaking, carefully constructed, and free from many of the absurdities which adorn some contemporary romances. Like most of them, however, the author attempted a far more complicated plot than Cooper gave to his Indian tales, and thus could hardly have achieved Cooper's broad and simple effects, even if he had possessed the other gifts for such work. His descriptions of the forests of Pennsylvania and of Indian customs are rather labored, but there is interest in the warfare between the Indians and the troop of volunteer Indian fighters, and in the picture of Tadeuskund, a "just Indian," as the Leather-stocking would have called him. Tadeuskund is a friend of the whites, but he is unable to restrain his people, and at length falls a prey to "the poison of forgetfulness," as did Chingachgook. His adopted daughter,

[1] N. M. Hentz was of French birth, and was at one time associated with George Bancroft in the Round Hill School at Northampton. During his life he seems to have been chiefly known as the husband of the popular poetess and novelist, Caroline Lee Whiting, whom he married in 1825. They taught for many years in various parts of the South. Hentz died in 1856.

the young squaw Elluwia, a white girl brought up among the Indians, is the more creditable to Hentz's invention in that she appeared before *The Wept of Wish ton Wish.*

A curious combination of Revolutionary adventure, and the tale of Scottish life and peculiarities, may be found in *Leslie Linkfield* (1826). Mungo Coultershoggle, the author, was apparently, from what one can gather in his works, a Scotsman resident for a while in America. His first novel *Goslingtan Shadow* had placed its scenes entirely in Scotland, with only a few references to America toward the close of the work. But in *Leslie Linkfield* most of the chief personages of the tale are brought across the ocean by the war. There are a hero stolen in infancy and for a time protected by a blind piper "Whistling Willie," who although neither of them know it, is his noble grandfather under attainder for adhering to the Stuart cause, a villainous pedlar, the lovely and extremely elegant daughter of a colonel, and various minor personages. The scene shifts again to Scotland where virtue is rewarded and villainy punished, after the most approved fashion.

A few tales of unknown authorship make further contributions to our knowledge of the more sentimental aspects of the Revolutionary War. Of these the most elaborate is *Saratoga* (1825) which offers the novelty of a converted Indian, the devoted henchman of an officer in the American army. The tale contains some bloodshed, much sentiment, and a good deal of mystification and misunderstanding.

A Sketch of the Olden Time, or General Lee's Farewell Dinner at New York (1829), described on its title page as the first of a series of Revolutionary tales by an Antiquary, is a pamphlet of only forty-four pages, apparently the work of some one desiring to unburden his mind of the results of a little not too arduous research.

The Betrothed of Wyoming has the usual hero and heroine, the wonted villain, an iniquitous Indian, and a Hermit who lives in the Wood. It is a thin and tiresome tale whose diction in such phrases as, "thou shalt be mine ere long, or perdition shall seize us both," or in "hie hence, lest if thou frettest me in my madness I slay thee," seems borrowed from the rashest

imitators of Scott rather than from those of Cooper. The tone of the tale rises from a sigh to a shriek, but never attains the accents of reason.

Although many of these tales of adventure had a vaguely historical background, none of them attempted exactness of detail or vivid historical coloring. There was, however, a little group who took their literary mission more seriously. Just as the first generation of women novelists in Massachusetts had written sentimental tales with an educational intention, the second generation carried on their work in historical romances, quite as conscientiously undertaken, and in intention almost as didactic.

Of the three New England women who patriotically undertook to revive the early history of Massachusetts, one, Harriet Vaughan Cheney, was the daughter of Hannah Foster, the author of *The Coquette;* another, Catherine Maria Sedgwick, was the most persistent and the most successful of the women novelists of the period; but the name of the third, Lydia Maria Child,[1] has been preserved by her activities as an abolitionist. All these ladies describe the usual aspects of colonial gloom, the Sabbaths, the theological discussions, the criticism of frivolous clothing, the arrangement of the houses, the rigor of paternal discipline, and, oddly enough, show a leaning toward the outcast Episcopalianism,—indeed, the crisis in the history of Mrs. Child's first heroine is precipitated by her father's rage at the sight of a prayer-book.

Mrs. Child's *Hobomok* (1824) is a tale—suggested by a review of *Yamoyden,*[2] a long narrative poem by R. C. Sands

[1] Lydia Maria Francis was born in Massachusetts but spent her childhood in Maine. In 1826 she married David L. Child and soon after became connected with *The Juvenile Miscellany* and wrote several books on matters of domestic economy as well as biographies of famous women. In 1833 appeared her best known work, her *Appeal for that Class of Americans called Africans.* In 1835 she published an Athenian romance *Philothea.* In 1841 she and Mr. Child became editors of the *National Anti-Slavery Standard.* Her active life was filled with various literary undertakings—poems and stories for annuals, letters giving impressions of New York, and an elaborate work on the *Progress of Religious Ideas.*

[2] This review in the *North American Review,* 1821, Vol. XII, p. 466, calls attention to the "unequaled fitness of our early history for a work of fiction," and dwells on the possibilities of the early days of New England and of the Indians, "a separate and strongly marked race of men."

and J. W. Eastburn,—in which a girl of great piety and native "elegance of mind," distraught at the death of her mother and the supposed drowning of her lover, becomes the bride of Hobomok, a young Indian, a child of nature. "Philosophy had never held up her shield against the sun and placed her dim taper in his hand." Consequently, his language is "brief, figurative and poetic," and his nature is "unwarped by the artifices of civilized life." Hobomok is a gentle youth of domestic tastes who walks with a heavy tread and when hunting bounds through the forest, whistling and singing, in a manner that one feels would have been displeasing to Chingachgook. At the return of his wife's beloved, not drowned after all, Hobomok's noble soul teaches him to divorce her, in the Indian manner, and go away to die among strangers.

Mrs. Child's next book, *The Rebels, or Boston before the Revolution* (1825), is concerned, so far as it touches history, with the Stamp Tax agitation, and much political talk is put in the mouths of the actors in the tale who gather around Governor Hutchinson and Dr. Byles. The story itself is of a sensational character, and a moral tendency, and hardly requires analysis.

These two stories of colonial times were written when the author was twenty-two. Although they do not display any great mastery of the art of novel-writing, they have a disarming simplicity of spirit which makes them more agreeable reading than the egotistical tirades of the infinitely more gifted Neal.

The second of these three authoresses, Mrs. Cheney, had a less varied literary career than did her two sister novelists. Her first book, *A Peep at the Pilgrims in 1636*, published in 1825, is a rather extensive peep in two volumes, and includes, among other Plymouth worthies, Miles Standish, who is represented as an affable old gentleman of an enterprising turn of mind. Sabbaths, and sermons, and rebuking of vainglorious garments do their part toward furnishing a sad-colored background. In her second story, *The Rivals of Acadia* (1827), Mrs. Cheney found a new scene for the usual mixture of sentiment and adventure.

Catherine Maria Sedgwick[1] had acquired some experience as a novel-writer before she attempted historical fiction. Her first story, *A New England Tale, or Sketches of New England Character and Manners* (1822), represented the life of a New England village, without the use of dialect and somewhat in the religious novel style. *Redwood,* her next work, belongs rather to the novel of manners, reminiscent of Miss Edgeworth, and with religious complications. The scenes include a Vermont village, a Shaker community, and a fashionable watering place.

After *Redwood* came the *Travellers'* (1825), a tale for the young, and then, in 1827, *Hope Leslie, or Early Times in the Massachusetts,* which was reprinted in London in 1828. The earlier part of *Hope Leslie* has a decided resemblance to *The Wept of Wish ton Wish* which appeared two years later. The scene is a farm on the Connecticut border, to which are brought two captive children of an Indian chief. They are kindly treated, but are regained by the Indians in a massacre. A white child is carried off, brought up among the Indians, and becomes the wife of the Indian boy, formerly her playmate at the farm. When captured and returned to her white friends, she pines silently until rescued by her Indian husband. Here the resemblance to Cooper's story ends. Miss Sedgwick moves the scene of her tale to Boston where the noble Indian girl, who in childhood had saved a white boy and lost her own arm by throwing herself Pocahontas-like before the tomahawks, is imprisoned, and is rescued by Hope Leslie and her tutor, a colonial Dominie Sampson. The story is managed with some skill, and is a striking improvement on Miss Sedgwick's earlier stories. Hope Leslie, herself, is a real person, and rather an attractive person, and although some of her

[1] Catherine Maria Sedgwick was born in Stockbridge, where she passed most of her life. Of this place Duyckinck says that "its widespread celebrity is to be ascribed far more to the reputation which Miss Sedgwick's descriptions and works have given it than to its great natural advantages" (Duyckinck, 1875 edition, II, 82). Miss Sedgwick's other writings include *Clarence,* 1830; *Le Bossu,* 1832; *The Linwoods,* 1835; *Letters from Abroad to Kindred at Home,* 1840, and many contributions to periodicals, and moral short stories for children.

friends and acquaintances are the stock figures of such tales others have real individualities.

Among other tales of this productive period are two Indian romances, *Tokeah, or the White Rose* and *The Sanfords, or Home Scenes,* and two novels by Catherine Julia Hart, Canada's first novelist, one a tale of convent friendship and "high life" in England, and the other, *Tonnewonte,* a tale of frontier life with a foundling hero who proves to be a son of the Marquis de Beaucaire. Hawthorne's *Fanshawe* appeared in 1828. Mrs. S. J. Hale published in 1827 *Northwood,* a tale of a New England village, and several other stories, adventurous or sentimental, found their way into print.

Although James Kirk Paulding published one long story in this decade, his main activity as a romancer falls beyond the period considered here. *Konigsmarke, or the Long Finne* (1823) can hardly be taken seriously as a romance, although what unity it possesses is given by its love story. It seems to combine a satire on Scott, begun but not carried through the work, humorous descriptions of a Swedish settlement somewhat in the Knickerbocker style, and a tale of Indian adventure. Paulding's chief productions at this period belong to the history of humorous writing, or of the short story, rather than to that of the novel.

This necessarily brief and imperfect account of the chief followers of Cooper must at least have made it clear that Cooper was in no danger of being driven from the field by the merits of his rivals. Of his three great types of romance the sea tale remained untouched until after 1830,[1] while the historical tale and the Indian romance were at once fondly adopted and generally merged into the historical tale garnished with Indians. In all these tales there was too much complication of plot and action; and many of the writers fell into the deeper error of taking the Indian out of his natural background of forest and lake, and putting him into the white man's back-

[1] The Connecticut poet, J. G. C. Brainerd, introduced a few sea scenes, including the capture of Captain Kidd, in his story, *Fort Braddock Letters,* but the greater part of the slender volume is devoted to the French and Indian War.

ground of settlement or city. Most of them had no personal experience of wilderness life, and those who had it lacked the genius that could make it live again for others. At their best their Indians are sentimentalized ghosts of Cooper's,—at their worst they resemble the wooden Indian of commerce for whom they might serve as models. Yet, mediocre in quality as is the work of Cooper's contemporaries, it has not, for the most part, the tentative amateurishness of Charles Brockden Brown's contemporaries and predecessors.

The originality and power of Brown's work had no stimulating effect on the aspiring novelists of his day. He founded no school. But the very promptness with which Cooper's example was seized upon, and the quantity of the tales of adventure which at once appeared, are evidence that the novel had at last found a foothold in American literature. In the decade from 1820 to 1830, both the short story and the novel became established in American fiction, the one by Irving and Paulding, the other by Cooper. But what gave body and an assurance of continuity to the movement was the presence of those uninspired, but diligent and conscientious, writers who toiled over tales of Indian adventure or historical romances, more or less in the manner of Cooper, or who fastened flimsy short stories into a framework, in supposed emulation of Irving.

The history of the first forty years of American novel writing is not one of steady advance or of progressive development, it is rather that of a series of experiments, not growing out of each other, but related only through their common aim. The early period of enthusiastically patriotic amateurishness seems to culminate in the work of Charles Brockden Brown, and then to suffer a decline. But Brown's work is not related to that of any of his predecessors. Like them he looks to England for his general form, and contents his patriotic zeal with the employment of native materials. Again, when Cooper revived the languishing American novel, he received his impulse from British fiction, and adopted the type of romance then prevailing in England. But like his predecessors he used American material, and in his best work he realized their ambition to give expression to American life and ideals. Mrs. Morton, who

had led in the patriotic endeavor to supply America with a fiction of its own, lived to see the publication of all but five or six of Cooper's thirty-two novels, so that her lifetime saw the early attempts to give national individuality to tales of the time-worn didactic and sentimental types, the brief reign of the marvellous, the first experimenting with historical and Indian materials, and finally saw those materials rediscovered and shaped into romances which, although without the didactic intention of her own work, must have fulfilled her desire for something wholly and typically American. It is perhaps a coincidence, but at least an agreeable coincidence, that the first great American novelist should so fully have realized the ambitions of his humble and almost forgotten predecessors.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Part I—Chronological List of Early American Novels to 1830.

This list differs from Mr. Wegelin's bibliography of early American fiction in that: (1) It contains a number of additional titles. (2) It omits a few titles which in his list seemed to be reprints of English works. (3) It includes only novels, and does not consider juveniles, short stories, political allegories, or translations. (4) It is arranged chronologically, not alphabetically. Under each year, however, the anonymous works are placed first, and are followed by those of known authors in alphabetical order.

* Indicates a title which does not appear in Mr. Wegelin's Bibliography.

† Indicates the title of a work which has not been used in preparing this study, but is included in the bibliography for the sake of completeness.

As far as possible long descriptive titles have been given entire, but quotations occurring on title pages, printer's or publisher's names, and lists of booksellers have been omitted.

1789

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1790

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1792

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1793

* 4. The Hapless Orphan, or Innocent Victim of Revenge. A Novel founded on Incidents in Real Life. In a series of letters from Caroline Francis to Maria B———. By an American Lady. Boston, 1793.

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* 7. **Imlay, Gilbert**—The Emigrants, or the History of an Expatriated Family, being a Delineation of English Character and Manners written in America. London, 1793.

1794

8. **Rowson, Susannah.** (See also Nos. 9, 10, 12, 25, 61, 63, 128)—Charlotte, a tale of Truth, by Mrs. Rowson, of the New Theatre Philadelphia. Author of Victoria, the Inquisitor, Fille de Chambre, etc. Second Philadelphia edition, Philadelphia, 1794, 2

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1795

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13. Cynthia, with the tragical account of the unfortunate loves of Almerin and Desdemona: being a novel. Illustrated with a variety of the chances of fortune; moralized with many useful observations, whereby the reader may reap both pleasure and profit. Hartford, 1797. (Wegelin: Williamstown, Mass., 1798.)

14. Female Friendship or the Innocent Sufferer. A Moral Novel. Hallowell, 1797.

* 15. The Female Review: or, Memoirs of an American Young Lady Whose Life and Character are peculiarly distinguished: being a continental soldier, for nearly three years in the late American War. . . . With an appendix, containing characteristic traits by different hands: her taste for economy, principles of domestic education, etc. By a citizen of Massachusetts. Dedham, 1797.

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1798

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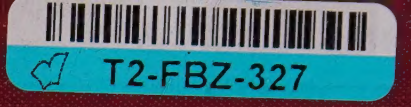
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